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OPPOSITION/ A22

PHILIPPINE DAILY
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email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph

Monday, April 26, 2004 ★★ 72 pages / 8 sections / vol. 19 / no. 138 P18

website: www.inq7.net

GMA widens lead over FPJ, says poll

Group seeks ₱3,000 pay hike for gov't employees

By Blanche S. Rivera
in Manila
and Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
PDI Visayas Bureau

A GROUP of government workers is pushing for a P3,000 across-the-board salary increase, banking on the promise of President Macapagal-Arroyo that she would take care of them.

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GROUP/ A22

EIGHT-YEAR-OLD Kenneth Villa, who is afflicted with Morquio Syndrome, starts a new chapter of his life after undergoing an operation. He pores over his favorite dinosaur books during a recent visit to the Museo Pambata in Manila. ERIK ARAZAS

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By Cathy S. Babao-Guballa
Contributor

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A NATION OF CLANS

Metro Manila: Binay family on top for 18 years

By the Metro Staff
Project Editor: Leah P. Makabenta

(Fourth of seven parts)

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DESPITE being the seat of the national government and the most economically advanced of the country's regions, Metro Manila is no different from the provinces in its politics. Here the system still depends on traditionalist family-based groups and networks, with clan patriarchs enjoying almost unlimited power.

There are two reasons for this. One is the size of the vote in the National Capital Region, whose 13 million population makes it the biggest of the country's 16 regions. Metro Manila accounts for 13.6 percent of the total number of registered voters.

Second is the large population of squatters and urban poor who outnumber Metro Manila's politically articulate middle-class which normally acts independently of traditional power centers. This underclass constitutes a huge vote bank for any political dynast to exploit by undertaking to deliver it to the national presidential machine in hopes of winning favor and influence.

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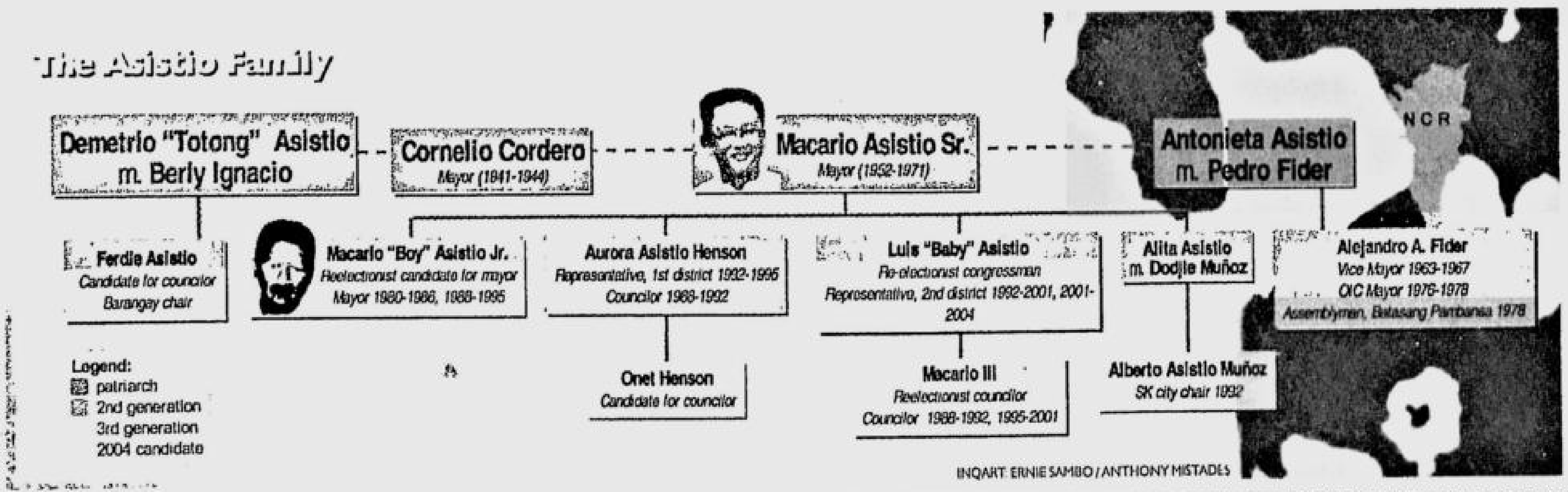
METRO/ A4



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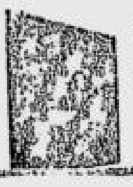

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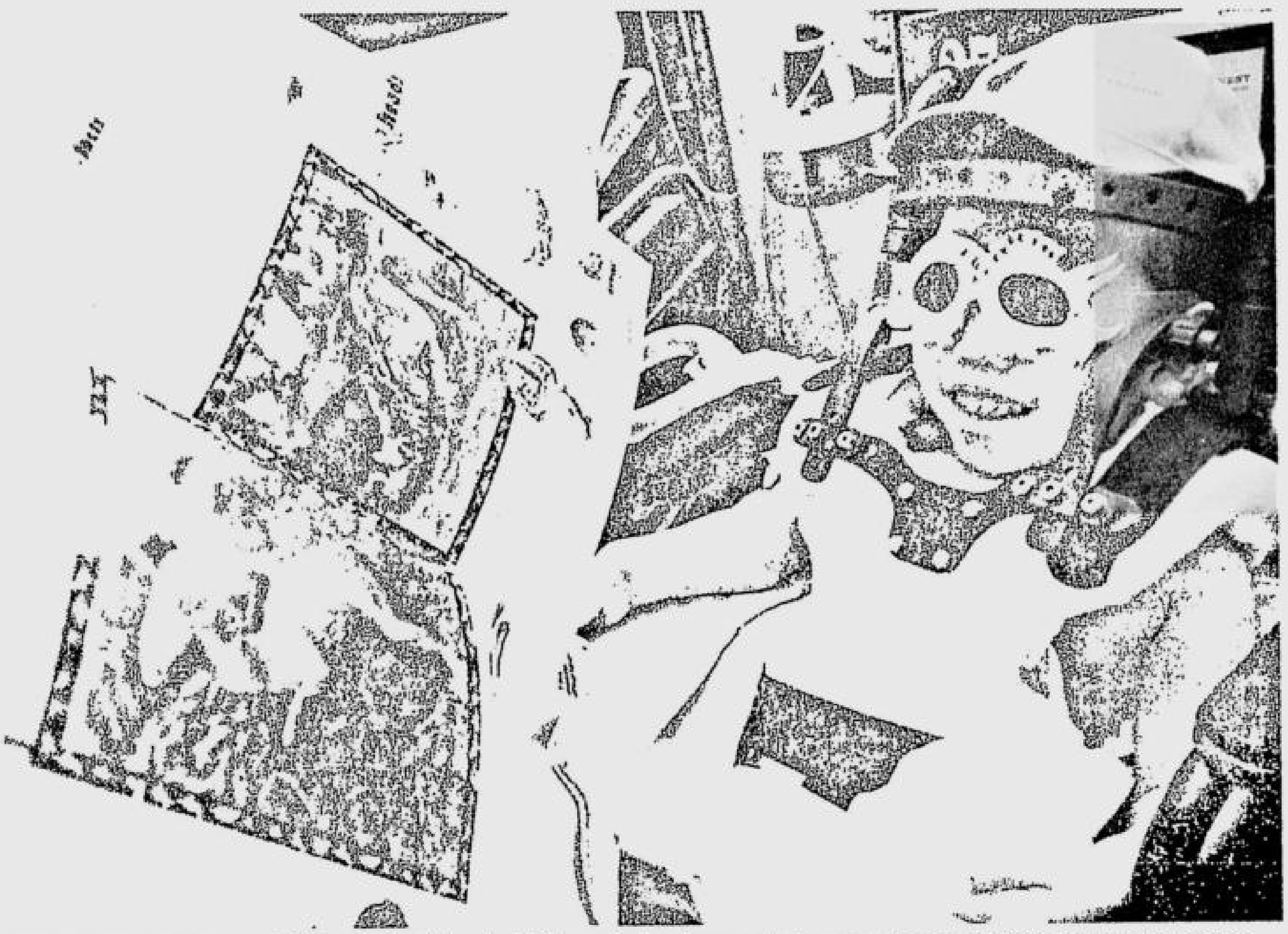

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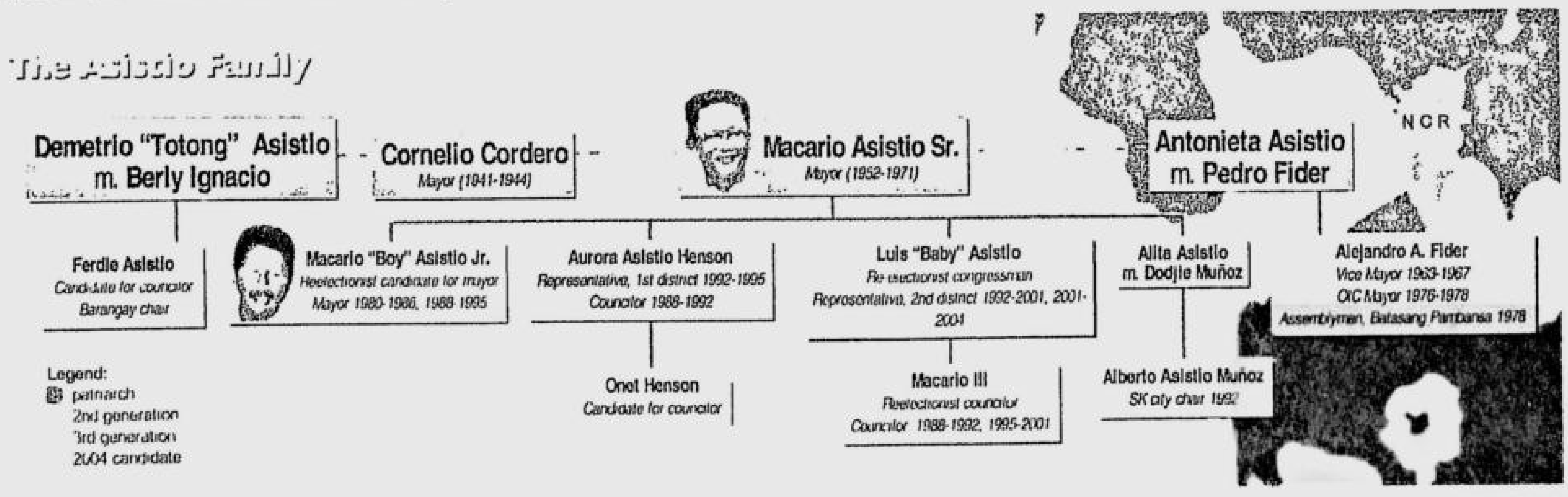

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WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Visayas and Mindanao including Palawan will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms mostly over the eastern section. The rest of the country will have partly cloudy to at times cloudy skies with isolated rains.
SOURCE PAGASA

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Cloudy with Rains	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

COMPILED BY RAY LEYESA, PDI RESEARCH/04/26/04

Muslims ordered not to vote for GMA

By Jeffrey M. Tupaz
PDI Mindanao Bureau

KIDAPAWAN CITY—The country's top Muslim clerics have ordered all Muslims nationwide to dump President Macapagal-Arroyo in the May elections.

The Bangsamoro Supreme Council of Ulama (BSCU) on Friday issued a fatwa (religious edict) against the President for the persecution of Muslims during her term.

The fatwa was signed by at least 125 Ulama and Ustadz before 3,000 Muslim faithful during a congregational prayer in Marawi City's Grand Mosque and Islamic Center.

It was the first time that a fatwa was issued against a President during an election. A similar fatwa was issued against then President Joseph Estrada after he declared an "all-out war" against Muslims in 2000.

The fatwa, which outlined the guidelines to be followed by the Muslim electorate in the coming elections, was read by spiritual leader Sheikh Jamil Yahya.

Yahya, the country's top Muslim cleric, said the fatwa was obligatory on all Muslims under the strict application of the Shariah (Muslim law).

A graduate of Madinah Islamic University in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Yahya said the fatwa stemmed from Muslims' desire to end the harassment and discrimination against them by the Macapagal administration.

In February last year, the government launched offensives against the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) in Pikit, North Cotabato. The conflict not only claimed the lives of civilians but also destroyed the lives of many others, especially children, who were displaced and left homeless by the war.

The Pikit offensive came after the all-out war declared against the MILF by Estrada which led to the fall of Camp Abubakar in Maguindanao, the MILF's main camp.

Yahya said that although an Islamic government and electoral system were not at work at this time in the Bangsamoro land, it was the moral and religious obligation of Muslims to choose between an evil and a lesser evil, which do not stand in the way of the Islamic faith, dignity and the fundamental right to freedom which shall be the primary considerations before they cast their votes.

Yahya, however, noted that there were other Muslim clerics on the side of both the administration and opposition camps but the "fatwa points directly to Mrs. Gloria Arroyo as the source of all this persecution for the duration of her term."

Maradeka, an alliance of Bangsamoro people organizations advocating peace and Islamic democracy in the country, hailed the issuance of the fatwa.

Nash Pangdapun, Maradeka secretary general, said it was a new political development for all Muslims as only the Christian groups and other bigger religious groups were vocal about their political preferences.

"Sheik Jamil Yahya saw the importance of the emergence of a new political participation by the Muslims. This could be an avenue where the Muslims can be seen differently in a fashion of political and religious moderation, not of extremism," Pangdapun said.

The fatwa also stipulates the important guidelines, which are Koranic in origin, for the Muslim electorate to properly choose the country's next leaders. These guidelines are:

- To vote for the national and local candidates whose rule makes foremost the protection of Muslim human rights, dignity and equal justice. It strongly condemns the violation of Muslim human rights with the illegal arrest and torture of innocent Muslims wrongfully accused of being terrorists.
- To vote for the candidates whose treatment of Muslims is characterized as fair, just and equal before the law of the land even as the Muslim Shariah in the real sense is not comprehensively implemented among Muslims.
- To vote for the candidates whose governance will greatly improve the quality of life of the people, either Muslim or Christian, and refrain from voting women into government positions as this is totally haram or forbidden to all Muslims.
- To vote for candidates whose political dealings with Muslims are grounded on sincerity and a genuine purpose for humanitarian concerns in Mindanao. It rejects government and their officials because of their insincerity in dealings with the legitimate Bangsamoro revolutionary groups, such as the MNLF and MILF.
- To vote for national and local candidates whose platform promises a viable peaceful and comprehensive political settlement of the Mindanao conflict.

Fil-Ams turn out to honor 1st Pinoy bishop in US

By Ruben V. Nepales
LA Correspondent

LOS ANGELES—Hundreds of Filipino-Americans turned out Saturday to officially honor Bishop Oscar Solis as the first Filipino bishop in the United States.

The Thanksgiving celebration, with the theme "Pistang Pilipino Parangal sa Bagong Obispo," marked the first time the huge Filipino-American community in the Los Angeles area had gathered to welcome Solis since he was ordained a bishop in February.

The day-long celebration, which also marked the 25th anniversary of Solis' ordination as a priest, was capped by a "Misa ng Bayang Pilipinas" with the bishop as the main celebrant.

The Mass, which had a strong Filipino flavor, was held on the grounds of St. Genevieve High School in Panorama City, which has a large Fil-Am population.

During the Mass, which was celebrated in English and Filipino, the following items were presented to Solis: a Philippine flag, a bamboo cross, *parol* (Christmas lantern), a miniature *bahay kubo* (nipa hut), as well as images of St. Lorenzo Ruiz and Blessed Pedro Calungsod.

The intercessory prayers, led by Filipino community leader Nellie Eustaquio, were recited in different Philippine dialects. Fil-Ams in Filipino costumes participated in the dressing of the altar. The El Shaddai Southern California Gospel Choir sang Filipino songs.

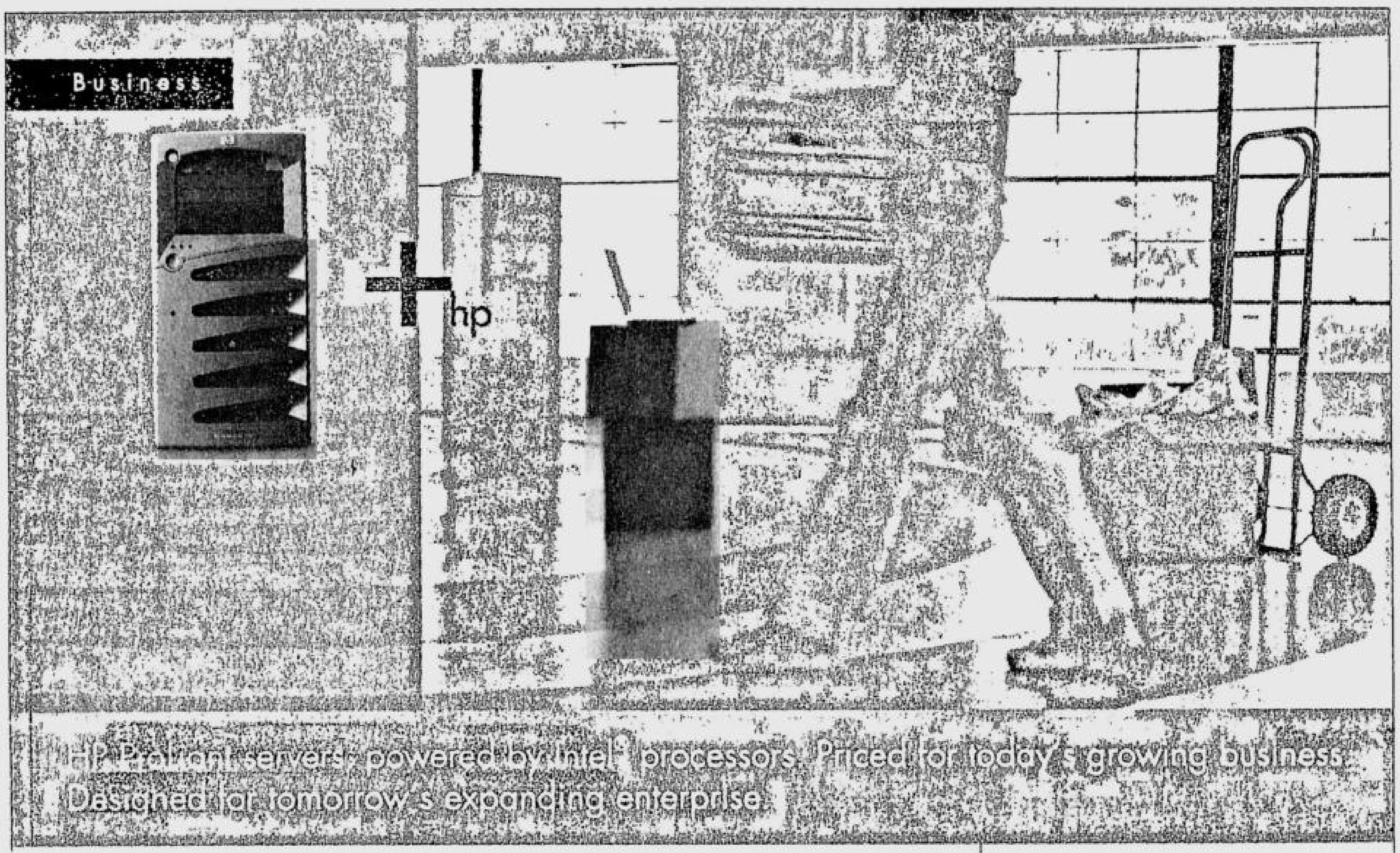
Sister Christina Sevilla, director of the Office of the Filipino Ministry in the Los Angeles archdiocese, organized the event.

Solis, 50, heads the Archdiocese of Los Angeles' coordinating council focusing on minority issues. Pope John Paul II named the San Jose, Nueva Ecija, native to the post last December. The LA archdiocese is the largest and most diverse in America with five million Catholics, including an estimated 500,000 of Filipino ethnicity.

In his homily, the cum laude graduate in Theology from the University of Santo Tomas in Manila asked the assembled Filipino-Americans "to pray for the Philippines, especially with the coming elections. We live in challenging times. Our country is suffering politically and economically. *Huwag nating kalimutan ang mga kababayan natin sa Pilipinas* (Let's not forget our countrymen in the Philippines)."

After Mass, Solis told the INQUIRER about his plans as "minister of harmony" in an archdiocese where Sunday masses are said in Filipino and 41 other languages.

"I've submitted a project proposal to Cardinal Roger Mahony and I've started the first phase by identifying the various ethnic communities and leaders and listening to their issues and concerns," he said.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US sending 100 observers to monitor RP polls

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

THE UNITED States is taking such a keen interest in the electoral process in the Philippines that it plans to field some 100 observers in the May 10 elections ahead of warnings of violence, vote-buying and cheating on that day.

In a statement released by Malacañang, the US Embassy in Manila said it would deploy the observers to polling stations around the country to "observe the conduct of elections, identify best practices and provide recommendations for changes in future elections." Philippine polls are known to be rowdy, violent affairs.

The US Embassy team of watchers will join the contingent the US Agency for International Development (USAID) is also sending over to observe the elections.

Deputy presidential spokesperson Ricardo Saludo said USAID's presence would help build national and international confidence in the elections.

But Saludo stressed the government would play no part in the monitoring of the polls by the US but was only releasing the statement issued by Washington.

"All the monitoring arrangements need some concurrence from the Commission on Elections, which has to clarify whether such an undertaking would compromise our sovereignty and the independence of the electoral process," Saludo said.

USAID, which had come under heavy flak for its alleged meddling in Philippine policy-making through the lobby group Agile, said it "would not pass judgment on the validity of the election results."

USAID, through the Consortium for Elections and Political Processes Strengthening (CEPPS), plans to field 10 international experts to focus on election administration, the political environment, domestic monitoring and electoral complaints, and will deploy a "small number of additional staff" to monitor the casting and counting of votes.

"They will begin work immediately and continue at least through the official announcement of results," USAID said.

The group will consult with the Comelec, the National Movement for Free Elections (Namfrel) and the Parish Pastoral Councils for Responsible Voting (PPCRV), as well as support local media groups monitoring the elections to promote unbiased reporting.

USAID has been providing financial and technical support to countries conducting elections through CEPPS, which completed its assessment of Philippine elections last month.

The review was made by seven experts from Denmark, Brazil, Lebanon, the US and the Philippines after consultations with local government officials, civil society groups and representatives of the various political parties.

The program is aimed at increasing citizen participation in the electoral process, improving the administration of elections and ensuring that the election results are respected.

3 rebels killed, 1 nabbed in clash

By C. V. Esguerra

THREE suspected communist rebels were killed and one was captured during an encounter with government troops in Compostela Valley on Saturday.

Members of the Army's 60th Infantry Battalion were patrolling Poblacion Laak at around 3 p.m. when they ran into at least six alleged New People's Army (NPA) rebels, sparking an exchange of fire, according to Lt. Col. Daniel Lucero, military information officer.

Soldiers recovered three guns and a Claymore land mine from the slain guerrillas, the official said.

The slain rebels had not been identified at press time.

Separately, army soldiers and pro-government militiamen repulsed an attack by 15 rebels on their patrol base on Saturday in Bayugan town in southern Agusan del Sur province, Lt. Gen. Roy Kyamko, commander of the military's Southern Command, said.

No casualties were reported among the soldiers and militiamen. Some guerrillas may have been wounded or killed in the fighting, but the military didn't provide figures.

The Saturday encounters came two days after the NPA killed a Samar resident and wounded three others during an 8 p.m. ambush in Barangay Nalihugan in Andara town.

Victim Eduardo Cakses and his four companions were on board a motor boat when heavily armed rebels and several civilians fired at them.

Roger Donayre, Rami Cipriano and Niko Armadilla survived the attack but Cakses died of gunshot wounds in the body.

Six of the alleged civilian assailants were identified as Romy Casaljay, Eyong Moloboco, Regan Aragon, Nonoy Aragon, Jose Aragon and Danny Absalon.

Police seized from the suspects an M-14 rifle, a Baby Armalite, a hand grenade and spent shells for a 12-gauge shotgun, M-16 rifle, and a .45-cal. pistol.

All the suspects escaped. *With AP, AFP reports*

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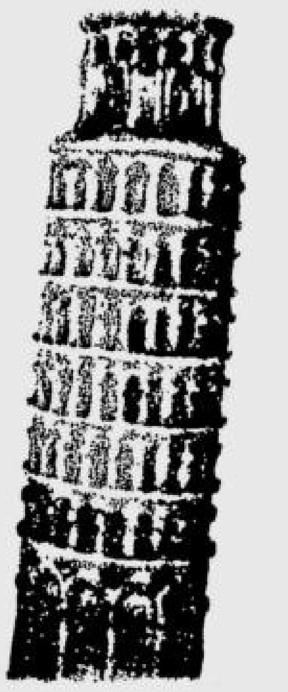

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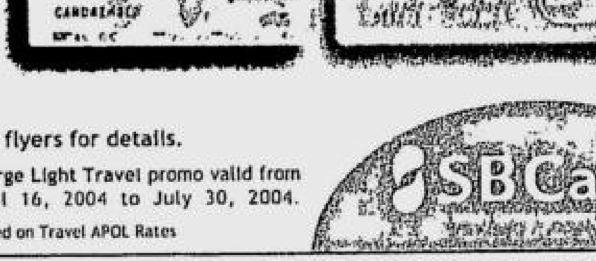

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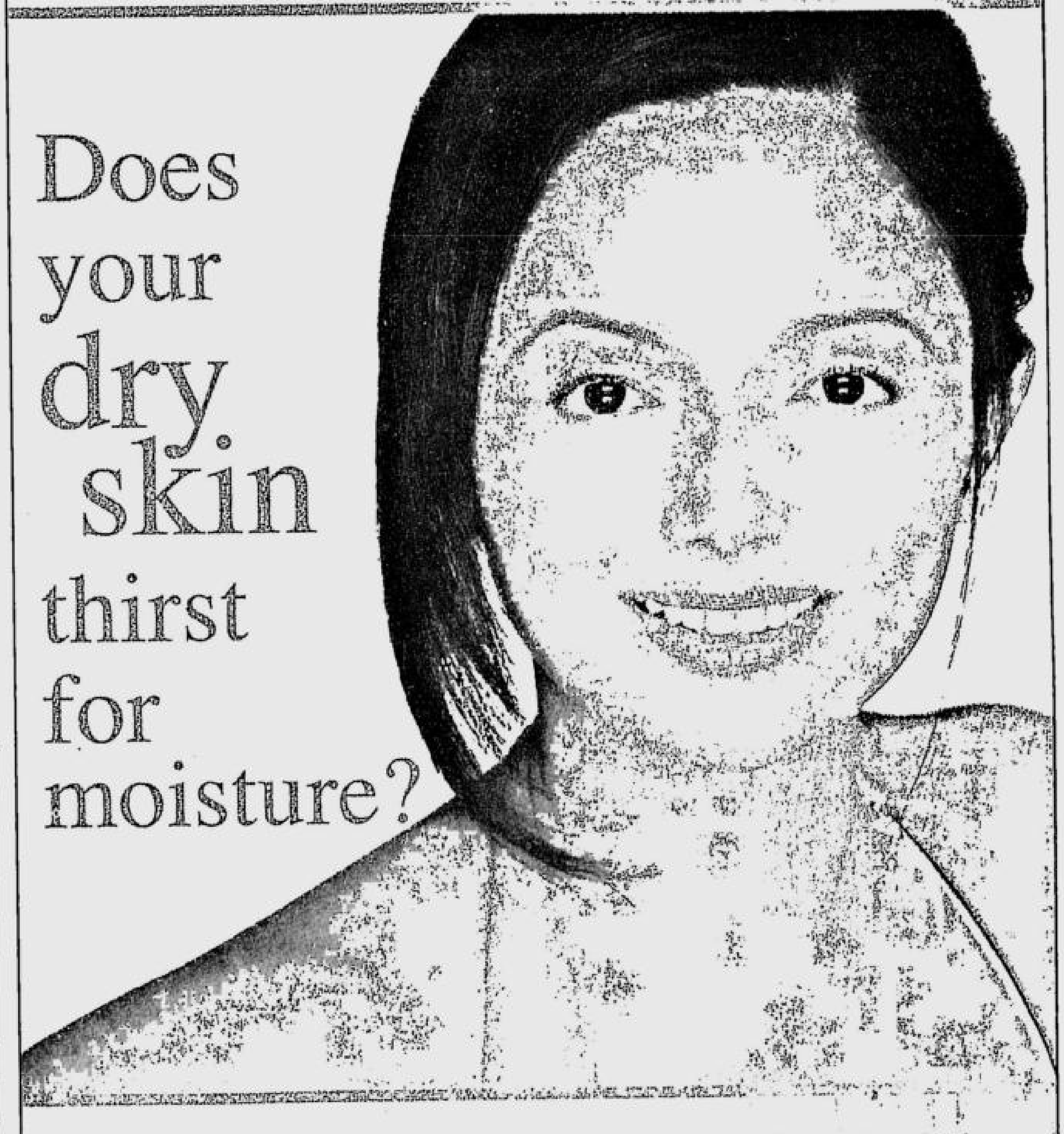
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Metro Manila: Binays on top for 18 years

From page A1

business capital, shows the traditionalist side of Metro Manila politics. One of the leading human rights lawyers in the anti-Marcos movement, he has shown a remarkable ideological adaptability.

Appointed officer in charge by the post-Edsa Aquino administration, Binay has won every successive mayoral race since. He runs Makati in near-feudal style, operating like a ward boss and political patriarch, dispensing patronage in a miniature welfare state.

Eighteen years in power have given him wealth, patronage, prestige and influence which has further entrenched his growing political dynasty.

Being the center of media and communications, Metro Manila has fostered the rise of celebrity-based political clans. Movie actor Rey Malonzo, who is completing three terms as Caloocan mayor, is the main challenger to the city's Asistio clan.

Show business and media celebrity also explains the political ascendancy of another popular movie actor, Joseph Estrada, who was elected President by a big margin.

For sheer longevity, the Asistio clan trumps all other Metro Manila political families, having been entrenched in power for three generations.

Caloocan

For the past two decades, Caloocan residents have seen only two elected mayors: Macario Asistio Jr. and Rey Malonzo, once staunch allies and now the fiercest of rivals. The former belongs to an entrenched political dynasty in the city; the latter appears to be attempting to set up his own.

In the May 10 elections, Asistio and four of his relatives are running for elective posts. Malonzo is running with his wife and son.

Three generations of the Asistio family have passed political power on to their descendants in the past 60 years. Cornelio Cordero was elected mayor in 1941. His cousin, Macario Asistio Sr., was elected mayor in 1952. Asistio's nephew, Alexander Asistio Fider, was elected vice mayor in 1963.

Macario Sr. ruled the city for the next 20 years until 1972 when he lost to Councilor Marcial Samson. His vice mayor and nephew also lost to Isagani Arcadio. The family temporarily snatched back the mayoral post after Fider was appointed mayor in 1976.

Asistio's son Macario Jr. ran for mayor and won in 1980, regaining the family's political clout. But he would lose the post again in the aftermath of the 1986 Edsa Revolution.

The 1988 elections started a new chapter in the family's political history. That year, three of Macario Sr.'s nine children ran for elective posts: Macario Jr. who was elected mayor, Aurora Henson who was elected councilor; and Luis, who lost his congressional bid. But Luis' son, Macario III, won a council seat.

Not only did the 1988 elections bring the family back to power. It also paved the way for a bigger dynasty, with more than one member of the Asistio family holding elective posts. The year also started Macario Jr.'s successful attempt to repeat what his father had done: he held the mayoral post for the next seven years.

Despite losing in his first attempt, Luis again ran for congressman for the second district in 1992, a post he would hold for the next nine years.

The Asistio family scored a big win in that election. Luis' sister Aurora was elected congresswoman for the first district while Macario Jr. was reelected. That same year, a nephew became Sangguniang Kabataan chair.

In 1995, Macario III was reelected councilor, and his father Luis as congressman. But Aurora lost her reelection bid.

That was also the year Macario Jr. lost the mayoral race to a rising political star, Malonzo, his former vice mayor and political ally.

Malonzo slowly worked his way up to power, presenting himself as an alternative to the Asistio political dynasty which had long ruled the city. He was councilor in 1988 and vice mayor in 1992 until he defeated Macario Jr. as mayor in 1995.

Macario Jr.'s loss in 1995 began another round of political debacles for the once powerful Asistio family.

In 1998, Macario Jr. tried to get his post back but again lost to Malonzo. But Luis and his son Macario III were reelected as congressman and councilor.

In the 2001 elections, the Asistio family suffered the biggest blow in its political history.

Since Luis could no longer run for Congress, he challenged Malonzo for the mayoral post while Macario Jr. ran for Luis' congressional position against another former ally, Edgar Erice.

The brothers lost and for the first time in many years, no member of the Asistio family held public office.

This year, the family is trying to regain political glory.

BINAY

ATIENZA

FERNANDO

Macario Jr. is again running for mayor, Luis is running for Congress and son Macario III is again running for councilor in the second district. A cousin, Onet, the daughter of Aurora, is running for councilor in the first district. Macario Jr.'s second-degree cousin Ferdie Asistio, an incumbent barangay chair, is also running for councilor.

Now it is Malonzo's turn to start his own dynasty, a setup that he once criticized. After coming up against the three-term limit, Malonzo is now running for congressman for the first district, his wife Gigi is running for mayor, and his son Ronald is running for councilor.

Macario Jr. acknowledges that theirs is a political dynasty although brother Luis does not agree. He does not see anything wrong in having five members of the family simultaneously seeking elective posts.

"Even if there are 100 of us running as long, so we are honest and good, this is better than one person who is corrupt," he said in Filipino.

Though he is running with his second wife and son, Malonzo denies that he is starting his own dynasty. He said that if his wife were to win, she would serve only for one term.

He himself plans to run again for mayor in 2007 and stay for three terms after which he will retire from politics.

San Juan

The Estradas of San Juan have the distinction of being the only Metro Manila family that is a serious player in national politics. The clan has produced one President and one senator and can be said to have a nationwide constituency.

The patriarch, Joseph Estrada, despite the ignominy of being ousted from the presidency for corruption two years into his term, remains an iconic figure and overlord in the municipality where he started his political career as mayor three decades ago.

The family has been at the helm of San Juan ever since Estrada became mayor in the 1960s. It is said that whatever he says, the people of San Juan will follow.

JV Ejercito, Estrada's son by Guia Gomez, is now mayor and is running for a second term, virtually unopposed.

Luisa "Loi" Ejercito, Estrada's wife, is now a senator. Their son Jinggoy looks set to join his mother in the upper chamber, if the surveys are to be believed.

A nephew, Emilio Ramon Ejercito, is mayor of Pagsanjan, Laguna.

Though its patriarch worked his way up in politics from the post of town mayor, the Estrada political dynasty owes much of its ascendancy to show business. A hugely popular movie star, Estrada was able to project his screen persona of the gangster-hero always ready to take up the fight for the poor into a powerful symbol. Though he comes from an upper middle-class family, Estrada is embedded in the public consciousness as a man of the masses.

Back in their San Juan redoubt, however, a rivalry is brewing between Jinggoy, an actor who followed his father into the mayoralty, and his half-brother, JV.

In 2001, JV was elected mayor of San Juan while Jinggoy was languishing in jail with his father, both of them accused of plundering the nation.

After he was allowed to post bail last year, Jinggoy is said to have wanted his old seat back. But sources close to the family said Estrada decided that JV should keep San Juan.

Next, Jinggoy thought of going after the seat of Rep. Ronaldo Zamora, one of Estrada's closest allies. That was soon abandoned, particularly after he was recruited into the senatorial lineup of the main opposition Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino.

But Jinggoy has not completely left San Juan politics. He has formed his own team, composed of six councilors, a congressional candidate and a vice mayoral candidate, to face JV.

Primarily because of Jinggoy, the race for the vice mayoral seat has become a three-cornered fight. He and his father have endorsed the candidacy of Philip Cezar for vice mayor. JV is supporting his vice mayor, Leonardo "Boy" Celles.

Challenging Celles and Cezar is independent candidate Rolando Bernardo, a consistent topnotcher in the council race.

Whatever the outcome of the vice mayoral race, San Juan is sure to still be in the hands of an Estrada for the next six years.

It remains to be seen, however, what happens to the uneasy truce between Jinggoy and JV once the patriarch eventually fades from the scene.

Marikina

Marikina is today a clean, and sparkling city. Traffic is light, garbage is regularly collected and the perennial floods are all but a thing of the past.

This physical transformation is largely credited to the Fernandos, that is, Bayani and his wife, Mayor Marides Lourdes Fernando. The couple have formed their own party, the Kabayani Team, which has allied itself with the ruling Lakas-CMD.

Marides, who is seeking a second term, was elected mayor in 2001, vowing to continue the reforms her husband started during his three terms.

Bayani, who now chairs the MMDA, came to power in the early 1990s. The son of former Mayor Gil Fernando, he transformed Marikina, ridding the city's streets of vendors and the river bank of squatters.

The mayor believes that she and her husband brought discipline back to the city and that they have made the people learn to trust the government again.

She rejects the idea that she and her husband are building a political empire. "Why? Who else is in the city? It's just me. All the other members of my ticket come from other families, and that is probably our strength," she said.

The Fernandos have not encouraged any of their relatives to enter politics, at least not yet. Their only daughter is studying business in the United States.

"I don't want her to join politics now. It's really all up to her, but if she wants to, she should be financially independent first," the mayor said.

But while the couple has done a lot for Marikina, the transformation has been limited to beautification and cleanliness, according to longtime resident Ramchrisen Haveria, 66.

"As you can see, there are only a few business establishments here," Haveria said, pointing out that unlike in previous years when many homes independently produced shoes, there are not many jobs available in the city.

One of the reasons is high taxes. The other is that development programs have been confined to the areas closest to the city center.

"It's about time they really encouraged businesses to come here, and I don't only mean big businesses, but small businesses as well," said Haveria.

Former actor and councilor Sonny Parsons, who is challenging Marides Fernando in the mayoral race, says the issue in this year's election is high taxes. "People are fed up with the high taxes in the city," he said.

The city has a few sources of income and are targeting the small business sectors that are there. Jeepney drivers associations twice went on strike last year to oppose a controversial ordinance requiring jeepney operators to pay an additional P10 per unit per day, or roughly P3,000 annually, in terminal fees, on top of the Land Transportation Office's franchise fee, drivers' ID card fee and other dues.

Mandaluyong

Instead of elective posts being passed on within families, two dominant clans in Mandaluyong have contrived not to challenge each other in the mayoral race. The arrangement has been likened to two mafiosos agreeing to carve up a territory in a conspiracy to maintain control of the city.

Mayor Benjamin "Benhur" Abalos Jr., who "inherited" the post from his father, Commission on Elections Chair Benjamin Abalos Sr. in 1997, shocked his supporters late last year when he announced that he would not be seeking a third term and would instead run for Congress. The move was an accommodation of a longtime political ally, Rep. Neptali Gonzales II, who is on his last congressional term.

Gonzales II will be running for mayor and Abalos Jr. for his Congress seat.

Abalos Jr. said he simply wanted to avert a potentially bitter and divisive campaign between him and Gonzales II which, he said, would be damaging to Mandaluyong.

In fact, the alliance between the two clans was forged 30 years ago by the family patriarchs, Abalos Sr. and the late former Senate President Neptali Gonzales.

Abalos Sr. had run for vice mayor in 1963, but lost. He returned to politics years later, running for mayor in 1980. He claimed he won the race, but then President Ferdinand Marcos stopped him from serving.

After the Edsa Revolution, Abalos Sr. became officer in charge of Mandaluyong and held this post for the next 12 years, finally relinquishing it to his son in 1997. Both father and son belong to the ruling Lakas-CMD.

Today, Abalos clan members are all over the city government. Another son of Abalos Sr., Jon, is running for councilor while his older brother, Dr. Arsenio Abalos, is gunning for the mayor's seat.

Yolanda Abalos, a sister-in-law, is a secretary of the city council.

Ruben Yatco, a brother-in-law, is vice mayor of Calamba, Laguna.

Both father and son have had their share of controversies during their 15 years in power.

In 2001, a businessman filed plunder charges against the two for allegedly stealing P719 million from the city coffers.

Serafin S. Neria, a one-time opposition candidate for councilor, accused the family of allegedly acquiring several pieces of property worth a total of P1 billion. The Ombudsman has dismissed the charges.

But if Abalos Jr. and Gonzales II have sealed their fathers' political alliance, the arrangement is not acceptable to everyone in the Abalos clan.

Dr. Abalos has refused to withdraw his mayoral candidacy to give way to Gonzales II, saying he was not a party to the alliance. "I am just here to offer residents a choice. I believe I know their problems," he said.

The race has become a three-cornered fight, with a scion from the third notable Mandaluyong clan, the Domingos, joining the fray.

Angie Domingo-Buan, a daughter of the patriarch, the late Mandaluyong Mayor Ernesto Domingo Sr., is the third candidate for mayor.

Another scion, Ernesto "Bibot" Domingo Jr., is a fierce rival of Abalos Jr. He has made several failed attempts to run for mayor.

Makati

For almost two decades, the people of Makati have known only one mayor.

Mayor Jejomar Binay, whose political ascendance began after then President Corazon Aquino appointed him OIC of Makati after the Edsa Revolution, is now making a fifth run for the post.

Binay's first successful run for mayor was in 1988. He also emerged victor in the 1992 and 1995 elections.

When he reached the three-term limit in 1998, Binay got his wife Elenita to run for mayor. She defeated Arturo Yabut, a scion of another Makati political family.

Arturo's father, the late Nemesio Yabut, was the political kingpin of Makati for 14 years, ruling from 1972 until 1986 when he was sidelined by the Edsa Revolution. The family has been trying to revive its primacy in politics but has been no match for the formidable Binay political machine.

In the first elections after Edsa in 1988, Ricky Yabut, who had been vice mayor under his father, ran against Binay for mayor and lost. In 1992, Arturo aligned himself with Binay, running for vice mayor and winning in the ticket. But when he tried to challenge Binay for the mayoralty in 1995, he lost.

Binay sat out his wife's term, accepting an appointment as chair of the MMDA. In 2001, he was eligible to run again and went up against actor Edu Manzano whom he defeated.

One of Binay's sons, Jejomar Erwin or Jun-Jun, is a reelectionist candidate for councilor of the first district. Binay is said to be lining up Jun-Jun to follow in his footsteps into City Hall.

Binay spokesperson Lito Anzures denies that the Binays are setting up a dynasty. "We're talking about [elective] positions here, not [appointive] ones. The people of Makati voted for the mayor because of his outstanding health, education and social services programs," he said.

Anzures pointed out that, except for Jun-jun, no other Binay relatives are working for the city government.

"Among his children, only Jun-Jun has political ambitions," he said, claiming that Jun-Jun has the qualifications for the position because he graduated with honors from the University of the Philippines and served as Sangguniang Kabataan chair for nine years.

But Councilor Oscar Ibay, a political opponent, insists that the family is trying to cling on to power.

"They do not want to let go of Makati, making the present setup a political dynasty," Ibay said.

Manila

In the country's capital, politics is also dominated by familiar names that have been in power for decades.

Manila's top man, for one, belongs to a family whose involvement in city politics dates to the period before World War II. Reelectionist Mayor Joselito Atienza Jr.'s grandfather, Buenaventura Atienza, was a businessman who devoted his financial resources to organizing sports events in Malate District.

The elder Atienza's son, Hermenegildo, was one of the founding members of the Liberal Party. After a brief stint as an appointive mayor after the war, Hermenegildo ran for Congress and served from 1946 to 1953.

Hermenegildo, who began his political career as a city councilor in 1935, became a guerrilla leader in the war against Japan. He was appointed military mayor of what is now Metro Manila in 1946 after Liberation.

The mayor's father, Jose Atienza Sr., worked for the emergency employment program of then President Diosdado Macapagal, from 1961 to 1965.

Atienza is now supporting the candidacy of President Macapagal-Arroyo, the late President's daughter.

As a young boy, Atienza was an LP campaigner, assigned to put up posters and campaign materials around Manila. Rising "from the ranks," he became an opposition assemblyman in the Marcos-era Batasang Pambansa.

After the Edsa Revolution, Atienza was appointed general manager of the National Housing Authority. Two years later, he ran for mayor, but lost to Mel Lopez, who is again challenging him in the mayoral race this year.

Atienza was the city's vice mayor from 1992 to 1998. At the end of his second term, he ran for mayor and won.

His son Kim is gunning for his granduncle's former seat, running for Congress against the incumbent, Joey Hizon. Kim is completing his third term as city councilor.

Miles Roces, the husband of the mayor's daughter Maile, is running for representative of the third district against incumbent Rep. Harry Angping. Roces, a councilor, is a descendant of the prominent Roces publishing family.

Atienza's running mate, Councilor Don Ramon Bagatsing, comes from an old political clan. He is the grandson of former Mayor Ramon Bagatsing, who occupied the post from 1971 to 1986. Various Bagatsing family members have held elective posts in the city after the patriarch bowed out of the scene.

Don's uncle, Manuel, is running for representative of the fourth district under the opposition coalition where he is allied with Mel Lopez.

A Lopez brother, Jaime, is seeking reelection as second district representative. *Reports from Edson Castro Tandoc Jr., Luige del Puerto, Margaux Ortiz and Tarra Quismundo (Tomorrow: Central Visayas)*

DFA exec warns on RP pullout from Iraq

By Jerome Aning

A DEPARTMENT of Foreign Affairs official yesterday warned the Philippines could suffer dire political consequences should it pull its troops out of Iraq.

"We should expect some sort of retaliation not only from the Americans but from the Iraqis as well, after Iraq regains sovereignty (on June 30)," said the DFA official, who declined to be identified.

He said Iraq could retaliate by not hiring Filipino workers or giving contracts to Filipino companies that would want to participate in the reconstruction of Iraq.

He said Baghdad could also block the Philippines' bid for an observer's seat in the Organization of the Islamic Conference and be "cool" to Philippine position in international fora.

The consequences of a troop pullout had prompted the government's Iraq Team, headed by Ambassador Roy Cimatu, to assure Iraqi Foreign Minister Hoshyar Zebari that the Philippines would not pull out its troops and that it remained committed to assisting in the rebuilding of the strife-torn Middle East country, the source said.

Malacañang had repeatedly stressed that while there were no direct threats to the 51-member Filipino contingent in Iraq, their safety and security were of paramount concern to the government.

Manila faces even greater retaliation from the US if the contingent is withdrawn, the DFA official said.

"The US will make us pay for every debt we owe and we will be removed from the list of preferred trading partners. The military aid they're giving us would be quietly revoked and our bilateral relations in security, trade and other matters would be affected," he said.

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UP scholars shine in international law tilt in France

By Philip C. Tubeza

THREE University of the Philippines "iskas" and "iskos" (scholars) shared top honors with University of Cambridge students in the elimination round of a prestigious international competition for law students in France last week.

UP students Diane Desierto, Ruben Acebedo and Neil Silva shared top honors with the Cambridge students in the English round of the distinguished Jean Pictet Competition (Concours Pictet) in international humanitarian law held in Mejannes-le-Clap, France, said UP team coach Prof. Harry Roque Jr.

The competition, named after former Red Cross lawyer Jean Pictet who helped create the Geneva Conventions, involved a grueling five-day moot court/role playing contest. It was the first time the Philippines took part in the contest.

"(The UP students) were the crowd's favorite. They were heavily applauded during the awarding ceremonies. The crowd loved the Philippine team because we were *mabait* (kind)," said Roque.

One of the UP students, Diane Desierto, is the daughter of former Ombudsman Aniano Desierto.

"The best thing was that our team matched the Cambridge students, who were already lawyers with many years of experience," Roque said.

He said the Cambridge participants, who came from England and Australia, were lawyers who were working toward their master degrees.

UP College of Law Dean Raul Pangalangan said it was an auspicious occasion since it was the first time the Philippines joined competition. The country was also represented by the Ateneo University but the Ateneo team failed to make it to the finals.

Roque said contest rules required two winners in the English round of the competition and the UP and Cambridge teams bested other teams from New York University, Utrecht University, Switzerland's University Centre for International Humanitarian Law, the University of Tbilissi in Georgia, and the National University of Singapore.

UP and Cambridge will meet two schools from Switzerland and Belgium, the two winners in the French round of the competition, for the contest's top prize in July, Roque said.

He said the UP team shined because its members were "well-rounded" in such subjects as international humanitarian law, public international law, human rights and refugee laws.

"They were able to integrate all the laws required by the competition," he said.

Don't pick on OFWs, Veep tells taxmen

By Jerome Aning

VICE President Teofisto Guingona Jr. yesterday called on government officials not to scarp income tax incentives for overseas Filipino workers, saying the plan was lamentable, unfair and opportunistic.

"Our OFW sector is the most energetic force in our economy. It should not be preyed upon as an industry, while our revenue collecting agencies remain inefficient in their tax collection efforts," Guingona said.

The Vice President said that while it might appear logical to ask highly paid OFWs such as engineers, ship captains and other professionals to pay more in taxes, "officials at the Bureau of Internal Revenue who are remiss in their duties now conveniently want to target OFWs because they declare their true incomes and judiciously remit these to the Philippines."

Guingona said the BIR had "sorely failed to go after the big-time tax evaders, along with professionals here at home who grossly under-declare their incomes."

Nuisance bet gets 2nd look

AFTER EDDIE Gil, could Ely Pamatong be far behind?

The Supreme Court in a 15-page en banc decision penned by Associate Justice Dante Tinga ordered the Commission on Elections to gather more evidence to determine if Pamatong was really a nuisance candidate.

The Comelec on Feb. 11, 2004, had declared Pamatong and 35 other presidential hopefuls nuisance candidates who could not wage nationwide campaigns for lack of party and constituent support.

In its ruling, the SC said that whether a candidate was a nuisance or not was a question "both of fact and law," and remanding the case to the Comelec was proper since the basis of the poll body's decision to disqualify Pamatong "is not before it (the SC),"

The tribunal directed the Comelec to complete its reception of evidence and to report its findings to the court "with deliberate dispatch" considering that the elections are just around the corner.

Gil had his candidacy revived after the SC ordered the Comelec, which had declared him a nuisance candidate, to revert to the status quo. *Philip C. Tubeza*

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Consulate to serve 34 Pinoys

THE PHILIPPINES is opening a consulate to be headed by an honorary consul in Indonesia's South Sulawesi province, a Filipino diplomat said Friday.

Olivia Palala, Philippine consul general to Manado in North Sulawesi province, said the honorary consul would tend to the needs of 34 Filipinos living among the 8.2 million people in South Sulawesi.

Palala said one of the honorary consul's first tasks would be to register the Filipinos so they could vote in the next Philippine elections in 2007.

Honorary consuls are non-career diplomatic officials, often appointed from among prominent and influential public figures in the country in which they live or of the country that they represent.

Jerome Aning

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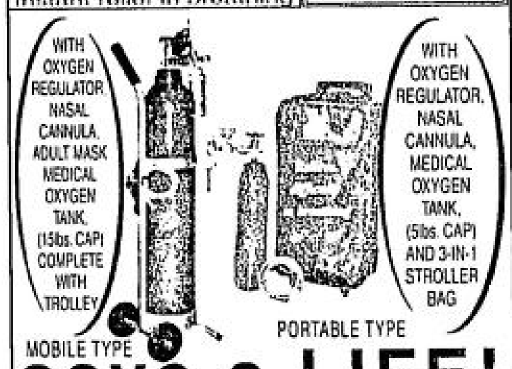

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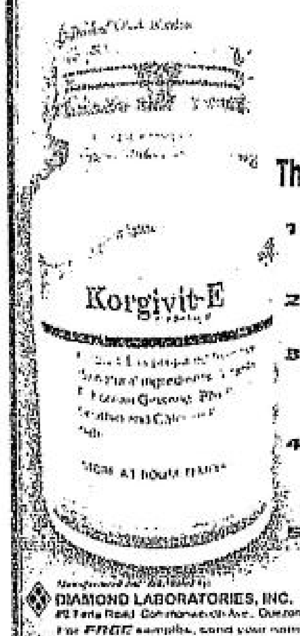

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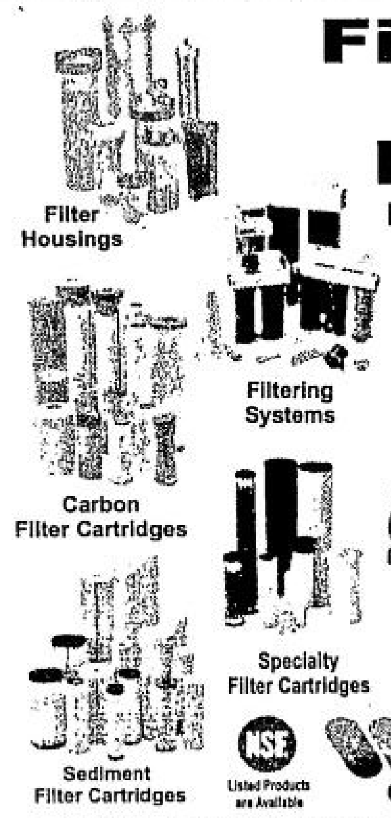

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MITSUBISHI MOTORS

Poll spending triggers beer, burger booms

From page A1

for the seeming boom in the sales of beer—and of fast foods, as well—is the flood of money flowing into people's hands as a result of spending by politicians ahead of the May 10 elections.

And it is likely people will go on guzzling beer well after election day.

Drowning your sorrows

"Win or lose, people will drink beer," a stock analyst said. "The losers will drown their sorrows in beer and the winners will rejoice."

The government has said it expects candidates vying for thousands of public posts to spend P30 billion on campaigning, and much of that is expected to pay for food and drink for public rallies, Reuters said.

When presidential candidate Fernando Poe Jr. paid his respects to Ilocos Archbishop Edmund Abaya during the campaign, there was no hesitation about the lunch order—Jollibee fast food.

The choice of the restaurant chain, whose burgers and fried chicken vastly outsells McDonald's in this country, is a reminder of why investors get excited about Philippine consumer stocks in an election year.

Money speaks loudest

Money speaks louder than policies during the campaigning, and hand-outs to voters can translate into big sales gains for firms selling everything from soft drinks to mobile phones.

"Investors should start accumulating now," said AB Capital economist Jose Vistan, tipping telecoms and food shares. "Election-related spending in the first quarter has boosted sales for the food and beverage industry."

Most big consumer stocks fell in line with the overall market's 2.7-percent decline in the first quarter due to anxiety over who will win the presidential election.

Analysts and fund managers say that left several stocks attractively priced given the likely sales increases—so long as the country's notoriously unpredictable politics don't get in the way.

Andrew Gillan, a fund manager at Aberdeen Asset Management, said Jollibee looked cheap relative to Asian peers at 13 times forecast earnings, especially given its plans to expand its successful model in the region.

Jollibee shares have already gained around 30 percent over the past month.

Citisecurities analyst Mark Canizares said investors had been slower than usual to jump on the consumer stocks bandwagon, possibly because Ms Macapagal is the first incumbent to run for president in two decades, raising uncertainty about the process.

"But this should not be viewed as a pessimistic view of the consumer sector," he said. "We still expect higher revenues in these companies helped by election-related spending."

Safe bets

Fund managers say the safest bets include Jollibee, San Miguel Corp., Southeast Asia's largest food and beverage firm, and leading mall developer SM Prime Holdings Inc.

San Miguel, which sells nine out of every 10 bottles of beer here, said its first-quarter net profit rose 30 percent, helped by strong sales. Vistan said the stock was cheap at 22.3 times forecast earnings.

Other analysts argue for a more cautious approach.

ING Barings is only recommending one buy in the consumer sector—SM Prime—expecting it to benefit from its nationwide network of shopping malls. It said the stock was attractive at 13 times forecast earnings.

Jojo Gonzales, managing director of Philippine Equity Partners Inc., noted there had been big market swings after elections, depending on how the new president was viewed.

"In 1992, when Fidel Ramos won, the market was up 18 percent a month after," he said. "In 1998, when Joseph Estrada won, the market was down 17 percent a month after." *Reuters*

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'Save the tarsier' gets boost

By Chito A. Fuentes
PDI Visayas Bureau

PANGLAO, Bohol—Efforts to protect the endangered Philippine tarsier received a big boost recently with the signing of a memorandum of agreement between First Generation Holdings Corp. and the Philippine Tarsier Foundation Inc.

The MOA was signed at the Bohol Beach Club in this town on Friday, coinciding with the observance of "Save the Tarsier Month."

Signatories were Rev. Fr. Florante Camacho, PTFI president, and former Tourism Secretary Peter Garrucho Jr., First Gen vice chair and chief executive officer.

Under the terms of the MOA, First Gen, the country's third largest independent power producer, has committed to support the research on the "Molecular pyelography of Philippine Tarsiers: Implications for Biodiversity Assessment and Conservation" to be conducted by Dr. Irene Neri-Arboleda.

First Gen has also committed funding for community organizations and activities in line with the tarsier conservation program's thrust of involving the community in its overall conservation effort.

The MOA also commits First Gen to fund the cost of improvements to PTFI's existing visitor facilities and trails and other infrastructure to promote eco-tourism in Bohol.

In his message during the brief program prior to the MOA signing, Garrucho said First Gen was proud to support the PTFI.

"Our commitment will start with an initial grant of P200,000," Garrucho said.

"This will be followed by subsequent grants for community organization and eco-tourism components which would bring our total support to about P2 million," he added.

Selected by the PTFI as the site for the Philippine tarsier conservation program is a public domain of approximately 167 hectares between the towns of Corella and Sikatuna, about 12 km from Tagbilaran.

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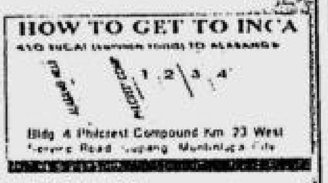

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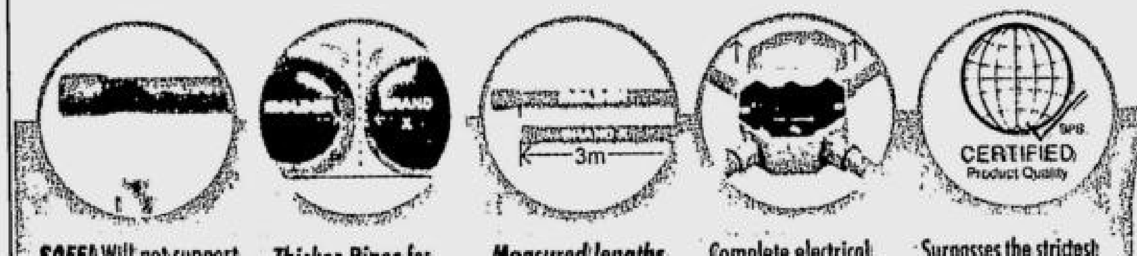

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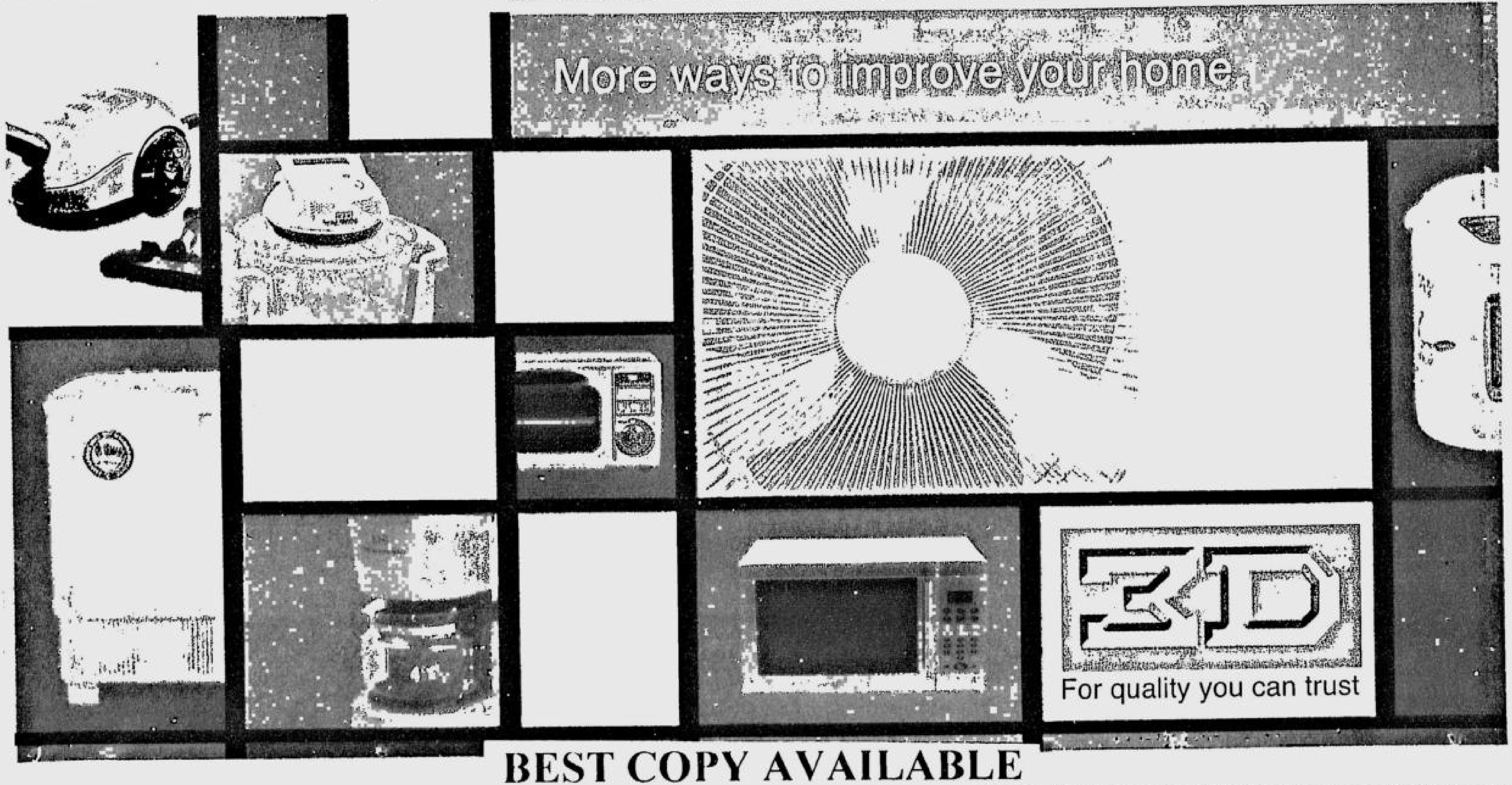

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The WORLD

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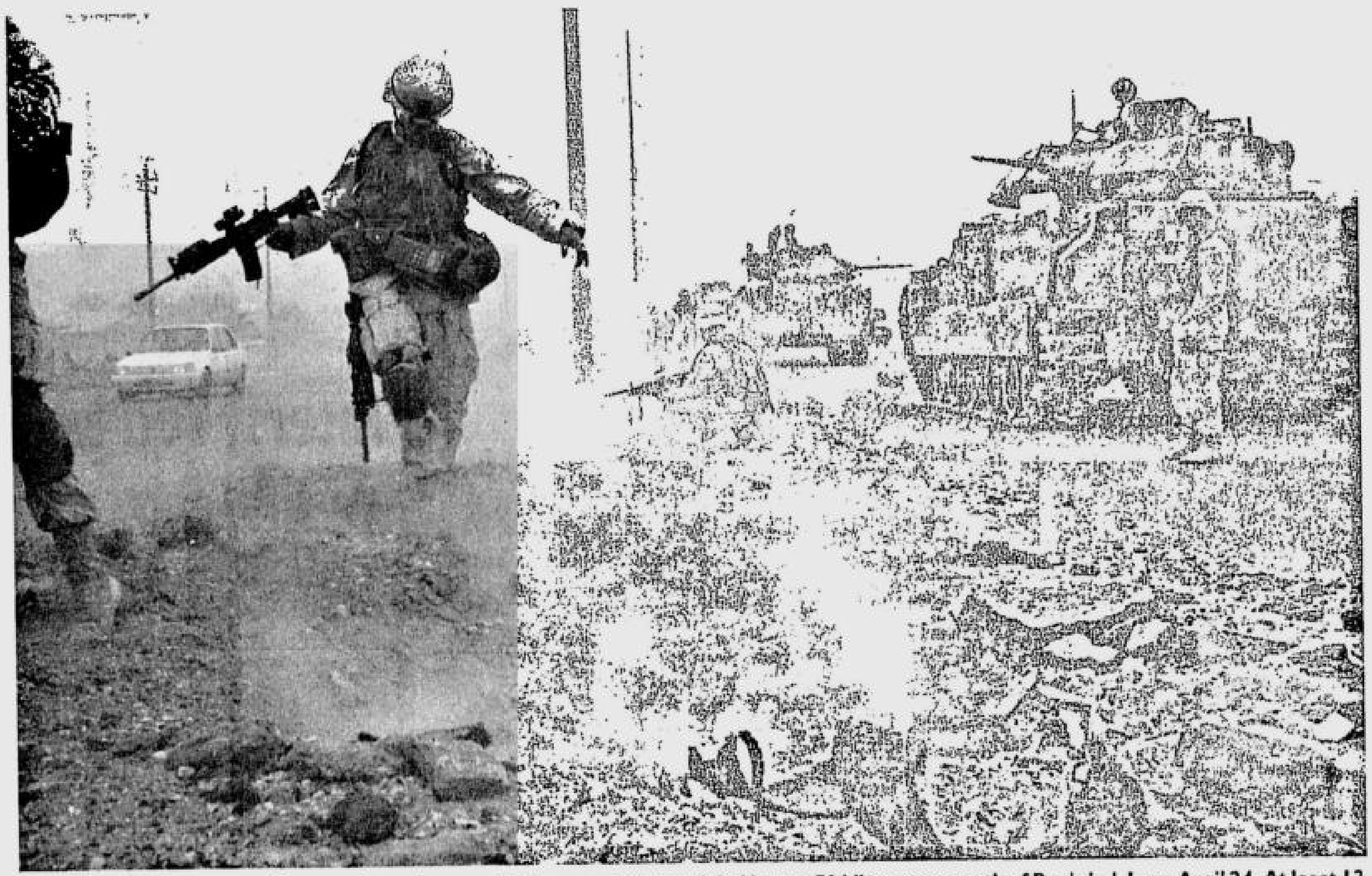

US ARMY soldiers secure the area after a bus was hit by a roadside bomb in Haswa, 50 kilometers south of Baghdad, Iraq, April 24. At least 13 Iraqis were killed, including one child, and 17 people wounded, a hospital official said. AP

Suicide boat bombers attack Iraq oil depots

Fresh bloodshed kills 47, including 8 US soldiers

BAGHDAD—Suicide bombers targeted oil installations in Iraq as violence claimed the lives of 47 people, including eight US soldiers, and a US general warned that his troops were poised to resume an offensive on insurgents in the flash point city of Fallujah.

The deadly incidents occurred both in the Sunni Muslim north of the country and in Shiite dominated areas, including the volatile Baghdad neighborhood of Sadr City.

Two US crew members were killed and four others wounded as a result of three concurrent waterborne attacks on oil terminals located in the northern Gulf, the US navy said.

They died when the small craft they were trying to board exploded. They had intercepted the dhow near the Khor Al-Amaya Oil Terminal in the northern Gulf.

In all, three suicide boats were prevented from reaching Iraq's two main oil terminals. However, the incidents still halted the loading of crude as one of the vessels exploded near an oil facility and another near a tanker, officials said.

In Basra, police arrested three Iraqis suspected in a series of suicide attacks in British-occupied southern Iraq that killed 74 people on Wednesday. They also seized a truck loaded with explosives.

In Taji, just north of Baghdad, four US soldiers were killed and seven wounded, three of them critically, when a rocket was fired at their base at dawn, according to a military statement.

Another two US soldiers were killed and one wounded in a rocket-propelled grenade attack on a convoy near the southern city of Kut, police said.

The latest casualties, when added to the US military toll, brought to 720 the American deaths since the US-led invasion of Iraq in March last year, including at least 519 killed in action, most of them fighting insurgents.

Fourteen Iraqis died and 11 were wounded when a roadside bomb hit their bus near Iskandariyah, 50 km south of Baghdad, hospital officials said.

A booby-trapped car exploded near a US military base in the northern city of Tikrit, killing four Iraqi policemen.

Sadr City, where militant Shiite cleric Moqtada Sadr draws much of his support, saw four separate attacks which killed at least 14 people and wounded 36, according to hospital staff.

"There was a mortar attack that would appear to have been aimed at the old cigarette factory where coalition forces are staying," said US Brig. Gen. Mark Kimmitt. "It did not hit the coalition but it did hit some citizens in Sadr City," said Kimmitt, who is deputy operations director for the US-led coalition.

Sadr is holed up in the southern city of Najaf. He is wanted in connection with the murder of a rival cleric last year, warned Friday that his supporters would carry out suicide attacks if US troops entered Shiite holy cities.

Also in the holy city of Najaf, an Iraqi civilian was burned alive in his vehicle after it came under fire near a coalition base, according to hospital sources.

The base, manned by Spanish soldiers, was attacked by eight mortar bombs overnight and that troops returned fire, a coalition spokesperson said. *AFP*

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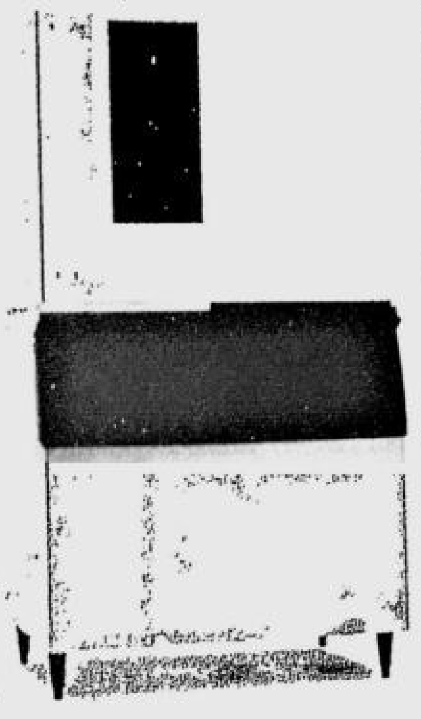

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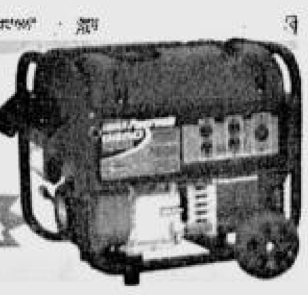

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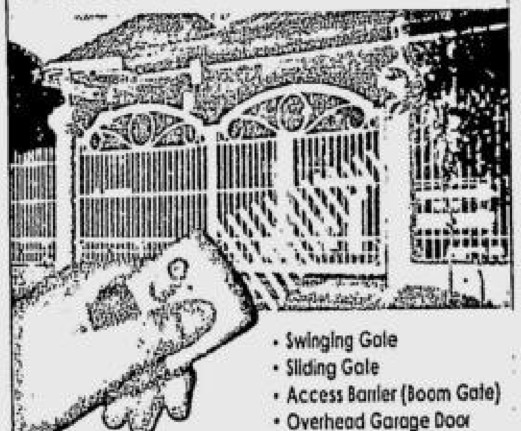

US tells Sharon: Don't harm Arafat

WASHINGTON—The United States has sharply warned Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon to keep his promise not to harm Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat.

Sharon said in an interview with Israeli public television that he believed he was no longer under any obligation to abide by his pledge to US President George W. Bush and that Arafat "no longer has immunity" from an Israeli attack.

"I promised President George W. Bush three years ago not to attack Arafat, but I am no longer bound by that promise, and (Arafat) no longer has immunity," Sharon said.

The comment, however, drew a sharp rebuke from US Secretary of State Colin Powell, who made it clear late Friday that he was speaking on behalf of the president.

"The president made it clear that he would oppose any such attempts against Mr. Arafat, and the president firmly believes that he has a commitment from Prime Minister Sharon that no such attempt will be made," Powell said, appearing on ABC's "Nightline" program.

A senior administration official said earlier in the day that the White House considered "a pledge, a pledge."

"We have made it entirely clear to the Israeli government that we would oppose any such action and have done so again in the wake of these remarks" by Sharon, the official told AFP on condition of anonymity. *AFP*

Abortion rights advocates march

WASHINGTON—Hundreds of thousands of abortion rights activists have converged on the US capital for what they believe will be an unprecedented celebrity-studded show of force Sunday designed to stave off any election-year assault on women's right to choose.

The March for Women's Lives was expected to attract anywhere between 500,000 and 750,000 participants, according to its organizers—and go down in history as one of the largest and most colorful displays of unity in support for legalized abortion.

But they are unlikely to be met with just smiles and plaudits.

Hundreds of pro-life activists, who equate abortion to murder, are also in town, readying for a heated face-off with their perennial foes.

Armed with placards and pictures of aborted babies, they plan to line the sidewalks of Pennsylvania Avenue to confront participants of what they call "the death march." *AFP*

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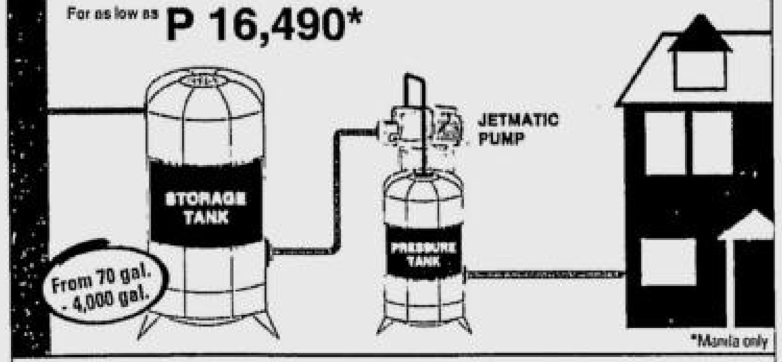

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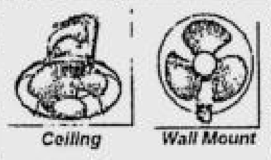

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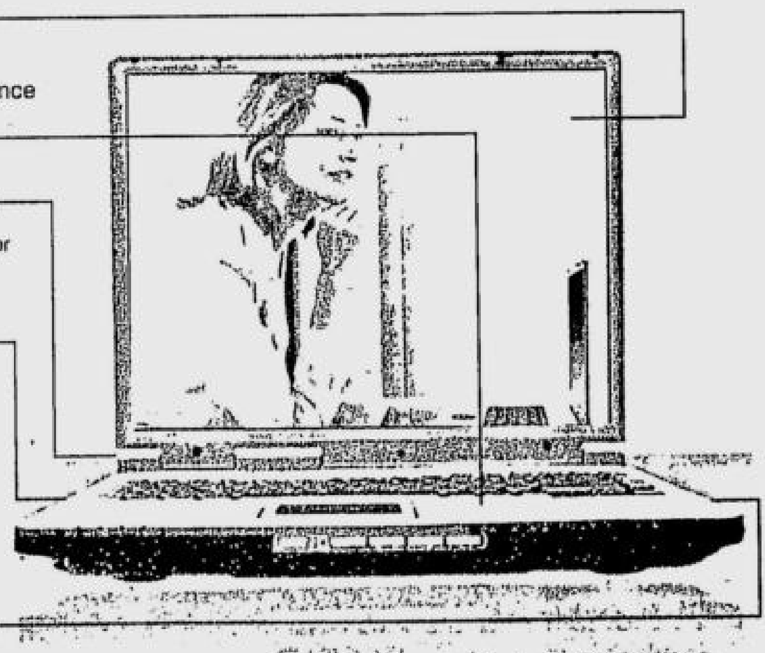

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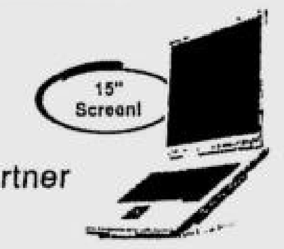

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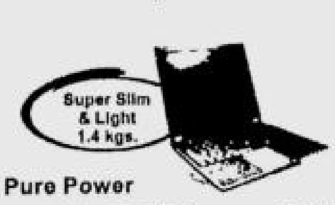

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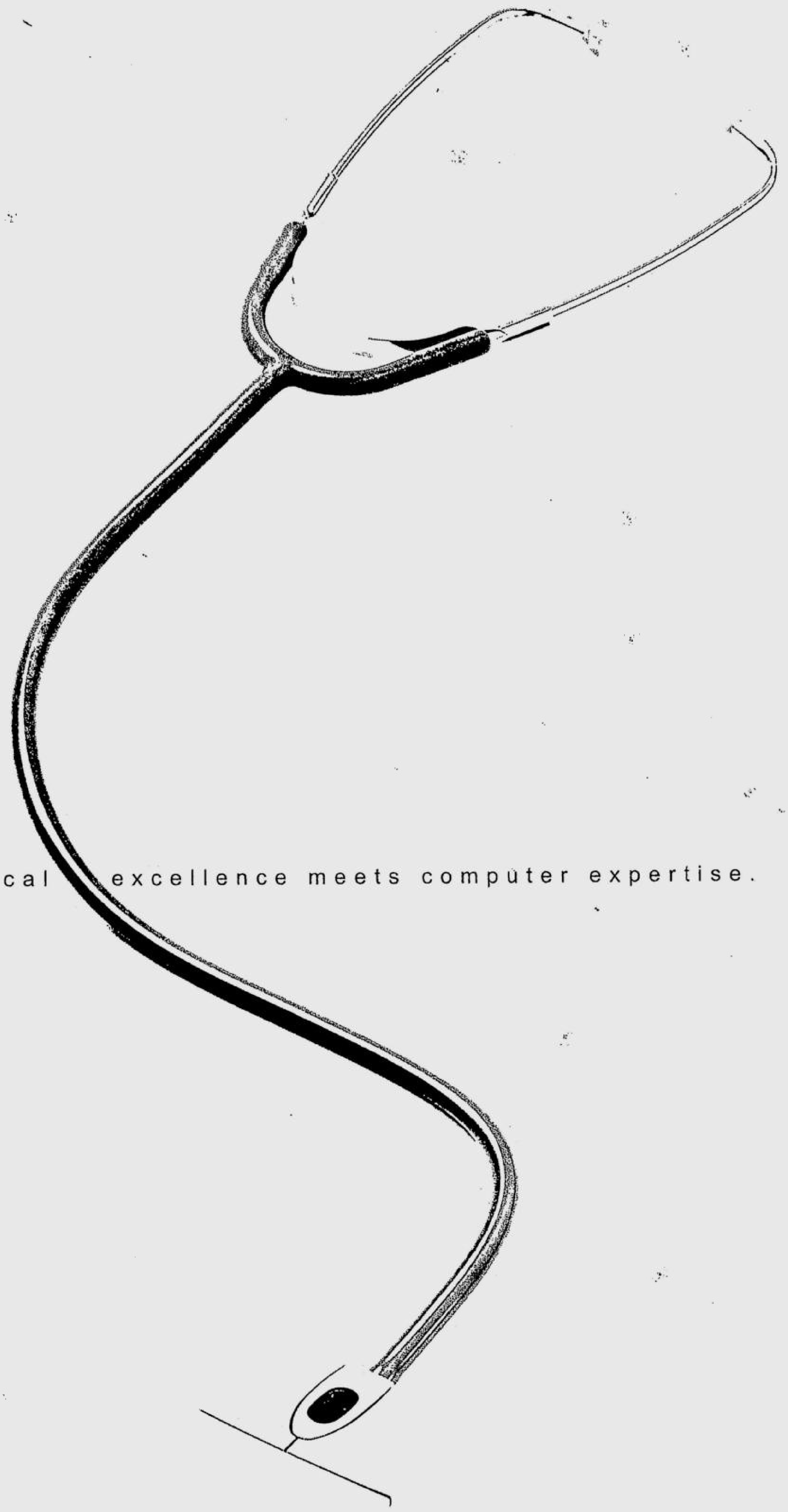
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China reports 5 new suspected SARS cases

BEIJING—China Sunday reported five new suspected SARS cases as samples taken from a woman who had died were being tested to see if she died of the disease.

In a potentially embarrassing turn of events, it was also announced that China's top laboratory on the SARS epidemic had been shut down due to the widespread belief that the latest outbreak started at the Beijing-based Institute of Virology.

"The Ministry of Health as of yesterday (Saturday) afternoon instructed the Beijing city government to take measures to isolate and close down the concerned laboratory," a statement issued by the municipal government said.

So far, two people had been confirmed as having come down with Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome, two were suspected to have the disease while five out of 13 who had close contact with the patients had developed SARS-like fevers, it said.

China's Ministry of Health also Sunday reported that only four new suspected SARS cases were detected in the 24-hour period from 10 a.m. April 24, meaning that one of the suspected cases reported by the Beijing government was not officially deemed a suspect case.

Furthermore, one suspect patient had died, with samples arriving at a secondary lab in Beijing early Sunday expected to confirm whether or not the 53-year-old woman had died from SARS.

The woman was the mother of a post-graduate student named Song who worked at the Institute of Virology, China's top SARS lab, in late March and who was hospitalized with the respiratory disease on March 29.

Following the closure of the lab, the World Health Organization announced that it was setting up a joint team to investigate whether internationally accepted bio-safety guidelines were compromised.

"A team of two or three experts will be in Beijing to help China get to the bottom of whether or not this lab was responsible for the spread of SARS in China," said WHO's Beijing-based spokesperson Bob Dietz.

"If this is the case there might have been serious breaches of internationally accepted bio-safety guidelines," he told AFP.

The 26-year-old Song worked in the laboratory from March 7 to 22, returning by train to her hometown in central Anhui province where she became feverish on March 25.

She further endangered infecting other passengers by returning to Beijing by rail where she was hospitalized on March 29.

Her mother, who cared for her in Anhui, became sick on April 8 and died on April 19.

Health authorities kept the outbreak under wraps until Friday.

The other confirmed case, Beijing nurse Li Na, 20, worked in the respiratory department of Jiangong hospital, where Song had been briefly hospitalized.

Another suspected SARS case announced on Saturday had ties to the Beijing Center for Disease Control. The patient, a 31-year-old researcher surnamed Yang, had worked at the center's lab.

Five others, including Li's mother, father and aunt have come down with SARS-like fevers, the Beijing government said.

In Beijing, up to 337 people who had close contact with the patients are under quarantine and are being monitored for fevers and coughing, the early symptoms of SARS.

In central China's Anhui, more than 100 people were under observation. *AFP*

Finance ministers see growth

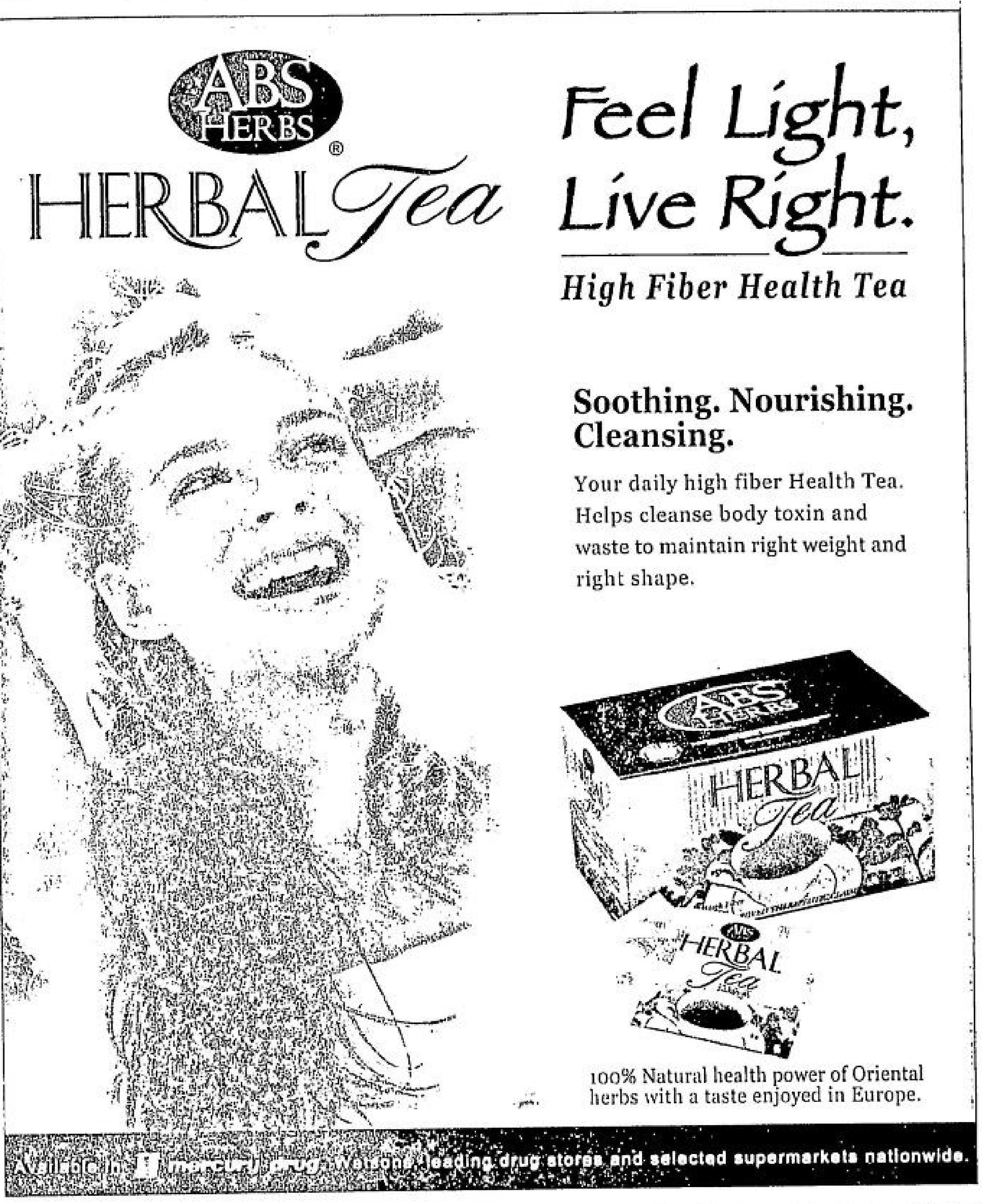
WASHINGTON—The world is poised for strong economic growth this year and next, the world's major industrial nations concluded at a weekend meeting, even though there are concerns about high oil prices and continuing unrest in the Middle East.

Finance ministers and central bankers were wrapping up three days of talks Sunday with a meeting of the World Bank's policy-setting committee on how to help developing countries improve living standards for poor people.

World Bank President James Wolfensohn said there is a reasonable chance the international community will achieve the first of a series of ambitious objectives, halving global poverty by 2015, "but that's because of the remarkable progress in India and China," whose economies have been soaring.

But he and other officials said the other UN millennium development goals in such areas as education, health and other fields agreed on four years ago will not be met.

Critics of the 184-nation World Bank and its sister institution, the International Monetary Fund, such as Oxfam, the international relief agency, say rich countries are failing the poor. It has urged these countries to urgently increase debt relief and boost aid funding so developing countries can reach the millennium objectives. *AP*



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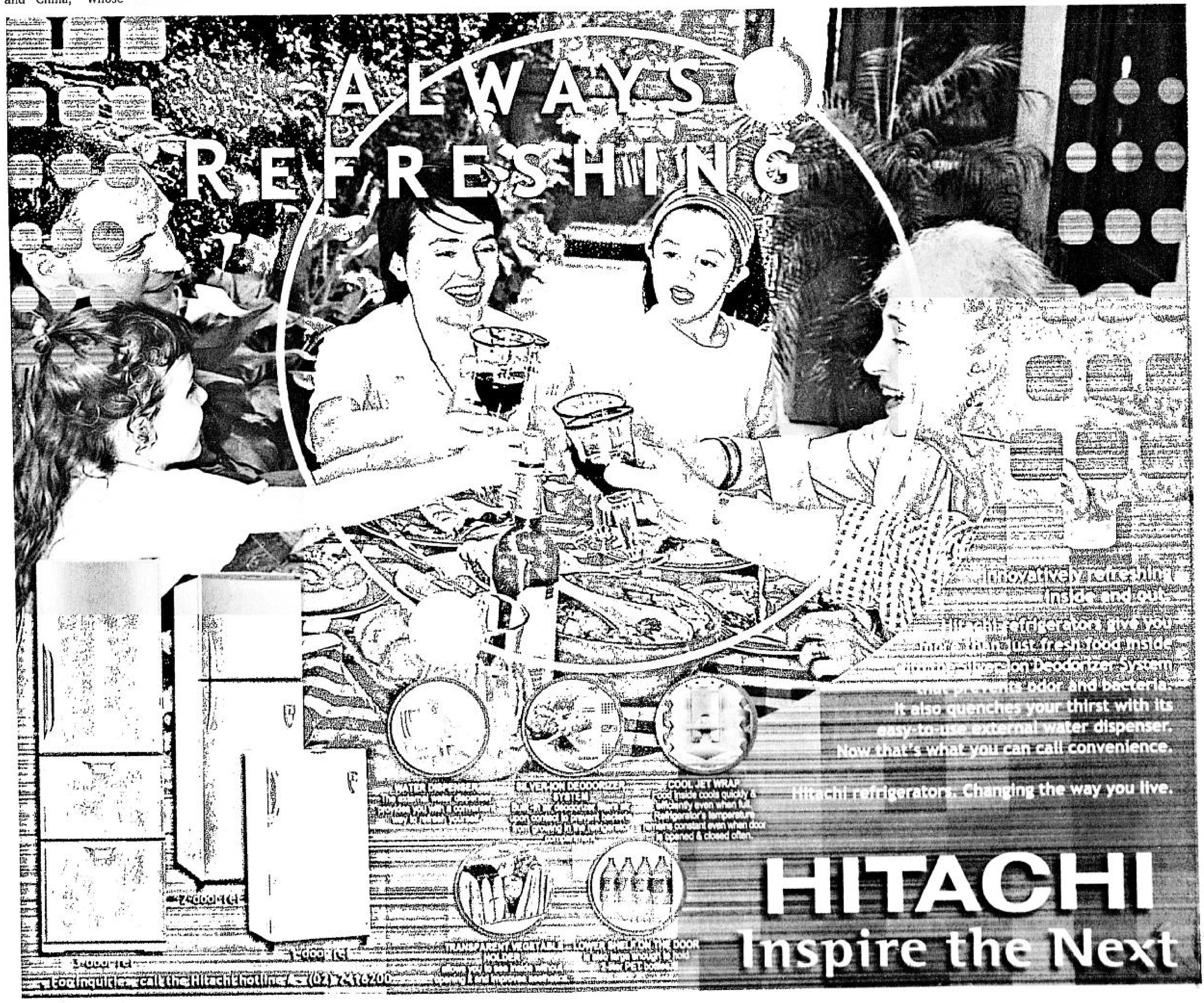

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Last chance

EDITORIAL

OPPOSITION presidential candidates Panfilo Lacson and Fernando Poe Jr. will meet today to build a common front against President Macapagal-Arroyo. Or they won't. Chances are, and if their record is any guide, the much-anticipated third unity meeting won't take place at all. That means they will be losing the opposition's best chance of winning the May 10 elections.

Both parties will share the blame, but Poe's Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino will bear most of it.

Previous attempts failed for the flimsiest of reasons: incompatible schedules, mixed signals, hard-line pre-meeting hype about non-negotiable preconditions, and so on. Over the weekend, Lacson described the "hotline" arrangement the two candidates had agreed on: the opposition senator texts Poe (that is, sends him an SMS message on his mobile phone), and the movie actor calls him up. They agreed on this set-up, he said, because Poe keeps his cell phone turned off most of the time.

"I texted him [last] Monday and waited for his call," Lacson told reporters in General Santos City. Apparently, he is still waiting.

Now if Lacson dealt with his lawyers on the Kuratong Baleleng cases in the same tentative way, he would be in jail today. The "I'll text you, you call me" system (if we can even call it that) cannot but be unreliable; it was designed to fail.

The reason last week's meeting did not push through was because Poe was free only in the morning and Lacson was available only in the afternoon. Now if, say, the director of the US Federal Bureau of Investigation unexpectedly arrived to offer Lacson, a former chief of the Philippine National Police, a closed-door briefing on a pressing terrorist threat, would he plead a conflict in schedule?

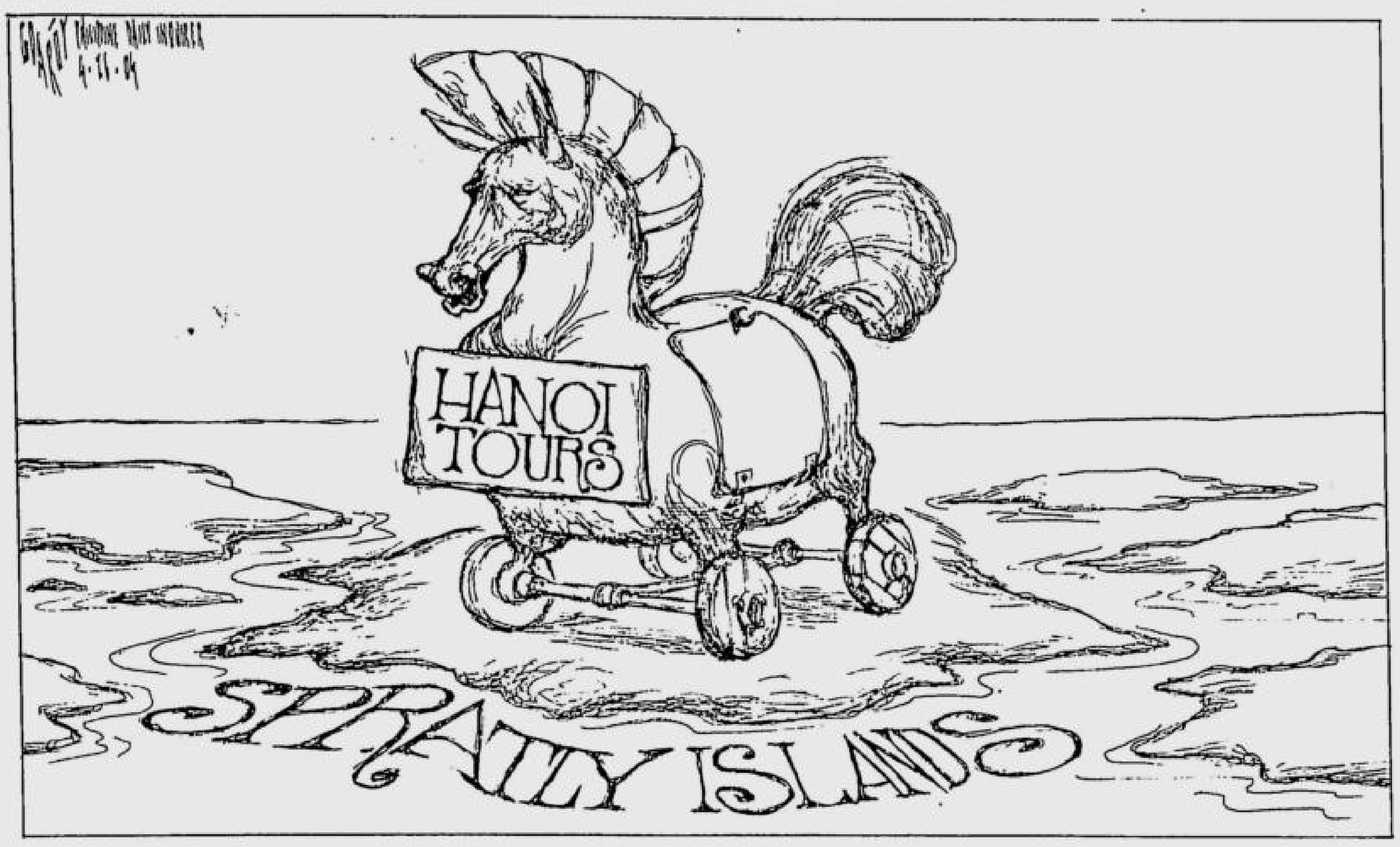
What these excuses mean is that Lacson is not desperate for unification. In fact, Lacson has less to lose in the elections than Poe. If he loses, he will return to the Senate, with three years remaining in his term. But he has run a disciplined, effective campaign, and if—like Raul Roco in 1998—he places a surprisingly strong third, he will be in an excellent position to contest the next presidential election. What is at stake for Lacson, therefore, is leadership of the opposition group.

If Poe loses, he will return to show business; it is hard to imagine him becoming a political player. If he loses badly, the controversy surrounding his close friend ex-president Joseph Estrada will cease to become an issue explosive enough to send someone all the way to Malacañang. (The Estrada base, anywhere between a quarter and a third of the electorate, will still be big enough to send someone to the Senate.) That leaves Lacson with a strong hand, strong enough potentially to wrest control from Sen. Edgardo Angara, the man behind the KNP.

Poe has more to lose than Lacson in the elections because without the senator it is unlikely that he will win. The lesson from the surveys is clear, and as old as Aesop: slow and steady wins the race. Unless Poe's hare stops loitering, basking in the sunlight of complacency, Ms Macapagal's tortoise will cross the finish line first.

But to hear Poe and his handlers speak, the surveys are distorted pictures of reality. If they really believe this, then Poe's campaign suffers from a fatal flaw. Several people in Poe's slate and campaign staff know how accurate some surveys can be. The fate, for instance, of the Senate topnotchers among them—Poe's personal campaign manager Sen. Tito Sotto, Poe's running mate Sen. Loren Legarda—was accurately forecast. If they choose not to believe the Social Weather Stations and Pulse Asia surveys, it is Poe's loss.

While Poe and Lacson continue to avoid the difficult, man-sized task of forging opposition unity, Ms Macapagal is going from strength to strength. While the two opposition candidates bicker over schedules and play to the gallery with "I will not step aside" statements, their main rival is widening her narrow lead. Lacson has very little to lose from yet another postponed meeting, but Poe has absolutely nothing to gain.



Mikey vs Lapid in Porac, Pampanga

As I See It

Neal H. Cruz

MANILA Mayor Lito Atienza is so confident of victory against former Mayor Mel Lopez that he is offering double-your-money bets against Lopez. He boasts that the former mayor won't win in any of Manila's five districts, not even in the first and second districts of Tondo, Mel's own district and that of his brother, Representative Jimmy, respectively. He urged journalists to wage bets for him.

"It's better than betting in the lotto," he said. "The odds are very favorable. And you can't lose. If I win, you collect the winnings. If I lose, I will pay the losing bets."

Really confident or just boasting?

Mel, however, is just as confident. "I defeated him before by more than 100,000 votes," he said at a press forum. "I will do it again."

How can you defeat Atienza with all his spectacular achievements, like the Baywalk on Roxas Boulevard, the ongoing Riverwalk on both sides of the Pasig River, the pedestrianization of Avenida Rizal and the improvement of Plaza Lawton? he was asked.

"*Maganda nga*. Impressive," Lopez conceded, "but at what cost to the taxpayers? Manilans are now deep in hock because of these expensive but superficial projects. The money could have been better used for the health, education and housing needs of Manilans. He has not done anything for the public hospitals, health clinics, schools and urban poor housing of the city. Yet the city is bankrupt."

"Not true!" retorted Atienza. "We have millions of pesos in surplus deposits in the banks."

"Oh yeah?" said Lopez. "What happened to the billions of pesos of surplus funds I left in the banks?" And he produced certifications from the banks showing that the City of Manila had a total of P1,006,343,767.49 deposited with the Philippine National Bank and Land Bank of the Philippines as of June 29, 1992, when he, Lopez, finished his term.

"What happened to all that money?" Lopez asked.

"Don't ask me," replied Atienza, "I wasn't the one who succeeded you. It was Mayor Fred Lim, who is now your partner in the KNP. Ask him what he did with the money."

(This exchange took place separately two weeks apart at the Kapihan sa Manila because Atienza refused a face-to-face debate.) Lopez accused Atienza of "cowardice" for being afraid to debate with him.

"Look who's talking?" retorted Atienza, "your own presidential candidate refuses to debate with my presidential candidate." (Lopez is supporting FPJ, Atienza is backing GMA.)

Atienza said his priority in his next term will be to recover valuable properties of the City of Manila that have been taken away from it by the national government. These are Intramuros, Rizal Park, Port Area, the Rizal Memorial Sports Complex and Harrison Plaza.

"These are all titled properties of the City of Manila," Atienza said "but we have lost control over them. We don't earn a single centavo from them. And yet the city government is being blamed for the squatters, crime, traffic congestion and urban decay in them."

When Intramuros was under the control of City Hall, then Mayor Antonio Villegas was able to clear it of squatters although it was then a virtual no man's land even for the police. Now the squatters are coming back. "What is Atienza doing?" people are asking.

"Don't ask me," Atienza protested. "Intramuros is not under me. It is under the Intramuros Administration whose chief is appointed by the tourism secretary. Where have you seen a situation where a mere subordinate in the DOT has more power than the mayor of Manila over a property that belongs to the city? Go to Intramuros today and see the sorry state that it is in. And yet it is supposed to be a tourism attraction."

Atienza said that had Intramuros still been under city control, he would have built the City College there, in the old Ateneo de Manila campus. But the DOT under Dick Gordon refused to return the property to the city because it wanted to give it to a foreigner who planned to build a hotel there that would violate the height requirement imposed by the Intramuros Administration itself.

Not having any other site for the City College, Atienza said, he is forced to build it in the only other space available, the Mehan Garden. He said he was forced to sell the City College building (the old PNB building on Escolta) because the city was paying an onerous interest rate to the PNB for the loan used to buy it. So he borrowed from the Land Bank at a much lower interest rate and paid the PNB loan. The city is now paying much less in monthly amortization. The proceeds from the sale of the building (which will make a good condominium for downtown residency) will be used to build the new City College.

* * *

Politics really breeds strange bedfellows. Incumbent Pampanga governor and movie actor Lito Lapid is a senatorial candidate of President Macapagal-Arroyo's K-4 ticket. But the President's own son, Mikey, Lapid's fellow actor and vice governor, is now running for congressman against Lapid's own brother. To rub salt into the Lapid wound, Mikey is celebrating his 35th birthday today in Porac, Pampanga, supposedly the Lapid bailiwick.

Mikey will give special gift packages to each of the 2,341 families in Barangay Pio, Porac, the model resettlement community set up for residents displaced by the Mt. Pinatubo eruption. Besides the gift packages, the presidential son will provide supplemental feeding for 1,000 children of the barangay.

Like his mother, Mikey will officiate in two water projects—the turnover of seven irrigation pumps in Porac and the groundbreaking for the Porac Water System which he arranged with the National Irrigation Administration (NIA) and the National Water Utilities Administration (NWUA), respectively.

Coming home

There's the Rub

Conrado de Quiros

ON WEDNESDAY, Raul Roco comes home.

I don't know if you'd like to tie yellow ribbons around the old acacia tree, or multicolored ones as some people have suggested. The first has been done—*bumenta na 'yan*, as the Tagalog phrase so well puts it. The second, well, I have no beef with flowers but I have a beef with the aesthetics involved in tacking them, or their designs, on to shirts, polo or otherwise, or to ribbons. It's, well, tacky. I do not like loud things, other than rock and classical music, which tend to call attention shrilly to one's existence. Roco may need loud to suggest he still exists, politically and physically, but I draw the line in my support for him there.

Otherwise, I will be one of those who will welcome him with open arms. The question of course that's foremost in people's minds is how sick he is. It is a fair question, and one the voters have every right to ask. The fact that he went abroad rather than sought medical ministration at home must suggest that the nature or extent of his affliction is beyond local facilities—talent has never been a problem in these parts—to deal with.

But I leave him to apprise the world of the state of his health. I personally am not exercised by it. I know him well enough to know that he won't push through with his campaign if he knew he wouldn't be able to live up to his responsibilities afterward. He does not take his duties lightly. To a fault: you wish he'd loosen up and take things a little less earnestly, or solemnly.

I don't know what Roco's condition is. But I figure, as far as sickness goes, there's someone who is far sicker, and whom I really should be worrying about. He is Juan de la Cruz. He isn't just sick, he is in dire extremity, writhing in pain on what seems more like a deathbed than a sickbed.

This is a nation that is sick in the body. This is a nation that began by being second only to Japan in economic potential. It is now second only to the backwater countries of Asia in economic impoverishment. This is a nation that began by being one of the most stable democratic countries in Asia, the envy of its authoritarian neighbors. It is now so unstable it envies the authoritarianism of its Asian neighbors and longs to prosper by that means. This is nation that was once proud and free and thought only of pioneering and innovating, but this is a nation that has now become abject and prostrate, thinking only of US aid and becoming cleaners of the world's toilets.

You go out of the country today, and you will be depressed by the rapidity with which our neighbors have advanced and the rapidity with which we have regressed. Not least when you recall our harrowing situation toward the end of last year. "What is happening to the country today?" people asked then. Good question. To which the answer was, "It's sick—and dying."

Well, the answer could have been "GMA," which would have been the same thing.

I do not know what Roco's condition is. But I do know that six years are all we need from him, after which he can retire, hopefully only from public office, a happy man with the well wishes of a grateful nation to attend his days. Will he be able to handle the strenuous demands of the presidency if he wins? Well, like I said before, I would rather have someone weigh the consequences of war and peace while wracked by pain than someone plunge us willy-nilly into war while seized only with ambition. Roco is sick only in the body, he is not sick in the mind.

I figure, as far as sickness goes, I need worry more about the health of Juan de la Cruz.

This is a nation that is not only sick in the body, it is sick in the mind. It has lost its moral moorings. This is a nation that extols opportunism, or embraces it, finding nothing wrong with candidates switching sides and beliefs, if they had beliefs to begin with. This is a nation that prescribes forgetfulness as the path to happiness, turning Marcos and Erap and their cronies from tyrants who crucified the country to hapless victims of the vagaries of fortune. This is a nation that accepts lying, cheating and stealing as a fact of life, or of politics: it is now perfectly all right to give your word on Rizal's grave and break it, to populate the Comelec with people who cannot count, to loot the public treasury to put up ads and posters and call it governing.

This is a nation that now calls raising a voice against all this cynical.

I don't know what Roco's condition is. But I do know he once cured a sick institution called the Department of Education, an institution that was knocking at death's door. Talk of miracle cures, in but a year's time he turned it around from one of the country's most corrupt departments to its most efficient one. I do know that Roco's battle with the disease that assails him is not unlike this country's battle with the scourge that afflicts it, and he has given it an example of courage to follow. I figure, as sickness goes, Juan de la Cruz needs to be cured there most of all.

This is a nation that isn't just sick in the body and mind, it is sick in the soul. This is a nation that has accepted its medical board topnotcher becoming a caretaker in New York. This is a nation that has become so disillusioned or deluded it believes the victory of candidates lies in the stars and not in its hands, that believes it wins by voting for the "winnable" candidate and loses by voting for the right one. This is a nation that will settle for the ignorant or the benighted or the evil because it thinks it has no choice, no future, no hope.

This is a nation that has lost its pride and its purpose, wallowing in mediocrity and despair. Worry about Roco's health?

I figure he is just what the doctor ordered.

Negros politics

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

IT'S interesting to note that for once Malacañang and the National Democratic Front agree on one thing: Fernando Poe Jr. is unworthy of the exalted public office he's seeking. But this should not be surprising, for by rejecting FPJ and describing him "a dummy of plunderers and human rights violators," NDF chief political consultant Jose Ma. Sison has in effect endorsed President Macapagal-Arroyo's electoral bid, now that the race is acknowledged by every pundit to be down to the two candidates. In a faxed statement from the Utrecht, Sison stressed that while GMA is "vulnerable to criticism" for her three-year performance in office, FPJ is "vulnerable to outright rejection" because he is "totally lacking in intellectual preparation and political experience for the presidential position." Sison also said FPJ cannot possibly turn the Philippine situation around since he cannot even unify the opposition and build a viable political machinery.

* * *

Because Sison's "endorsement" of GMA is rather thickly laid, there's speculation that the Palace had solicited it; but it quickly denied this. Actually I wouldn't put it past the government panel to propose something like that—the panel members wouldn't be doing their homework if they didn't. There are also some agile minds who suspect that Sison's "endorsement" may have had something to do with the exiled NDF leaders' desire to be stricken off the US list of "international terrorists" and here, doubtless, the Philippine government can help them.

But even without the quid pro quo, I suspect the NDF leaders would rather work at prospects of peace with GMA's administration than with FPJ's. The current administration doggedly pushed for the resumption of the peace talks in Oslo despite a number of setbacks, such as the imposition of revolutionary campaign permit taxes on candidates. Besides, Sison is quite comfortable with his *panggalatok kababayan* Joe de Venecia, the moving spirit behind the peace talks, than with Vicente Sotto. Sison and JDV frequently "exchange notes" through their cellphones in Pangasinense.

* * *

I was in Bacolod recently to join my husband's Class '54 of Negros Occidental High School, the largest public high school in the Visayas, as it celebrated its golden anniversary in week-long festivities. Classmates came from around the country and across the seas. One of the highlights of their celebration was a class party at the Sugarland Hotel that featured an exciting exhibition of dances from the good old days by very able dancesport performers, courtesy of corporate lawyer Noel Laman, a director of DanceSport Philippines. But the climax of the party was the surprise and unplanned appearance by President Macapagal. Deeply tanned and looking a bit tired from the long day which brought her from a remote corner of Pangasinan to Bacolod, she greeted the jubilarians who were quite overwhelmed to have the President drop in on their celebration. At the end of her brief speech, GMA said she won't beat around the bush "since it's campaign season." Asking for Class '54's votes, she got a resounding yes.

* * *

Last Friday, I joined my husband and two PNOC officials, Alfredo Parungao and Rene Bala, executive vice president and energy research department chief, respectively, in a trip to Talisay (about 45 minutes from Bacolod) to the offices of First Farmers Holding Co., which is owned by 747 sugar cane farmers/stockholders. There my husband signed, on behalf of the PNOC, a joint-venture agreement with First Farmers' investor, the Talisay Bioenergy Inc., and the British firm Bronzeoak Philippines, the technology provider, to use bagasse (the sugarcane pulp), for energy generation in a 30-MW power plant. GMA witnessed the signing.

I make it a point to support in this space the use of indigenous and alternative sources of energy in this country, as this would free us from dependence on fossil fuels.

* * *

I tried to understand Negros Occidental's topsy-turvy political situation. Recall that some weeks back, it attracted a lot of attention when Gov. Joseph Marañon and his brother, Rep. Alfred Marañon, bolted the NPC-Lakas coalition and jumped to the camp of FPJ within days of GMA's attendance at the governor's birthday celebration, where he raised her hand in endorsement. Vice Gov. Elpidio Zayco, Representatives Kako Lacson (3rd district), Apolinario Lozada (5th district), Genaro Alvarez (6th district) and quite a number of mayors joined them into FPJ's camp. It seemed at first that the only one left for GMA was Bacolod's lone representative, Monico Puentevella; but he was joined pretty soon by Representatives Jules Ledesma (1st district) and Charlie Cojuangco (4th district), Danding's son.

* * *

The Marañons' turnabout appears to have produced a backlash among the people, and the front line officials, the mayors, sensed anger in the people, such that pretty soon many of them began returning to GMA's fold. Of the 32 mayors, the latest to bolt to GMA was Anthony Lizares of Talisay, who was said to have been quite peeved when FPJ's wife Susan Roces, who hails from Bacolod, stood him up in his hometown.

The question that buzzed after the Marañon defection was, where Eduardo Cojuangco stood. What proved to be the weather vane was the defection to GMA's side of Mayor Cynthia de la Cruz of Salvador Benedicto town (who is also president of the mayor's league). Her husband, former Mayor Nene de la Cruz, is the right-hand man of Cojuangco in Negros, and the pols say that where the De la Cruzes are, that's where Cojuangco is. A corollary development that's most curious, however, is that before the bolting of the Marañons, the landowners were just watching where the wind would blow. Now they've started to come out for GMA. (More on Negros politics tomorrow.)

The Nene on my mind

KRIS-CROSSING MINDANAO

Antonio J. Montalvan II

PICTURES say a thousand words, so it is said. The INQUIRER's front-page photo of Fernando Poe Jr. and Loren Legarda alongside the Marcoses on stage in an Ilocos rally immediately sent chills down the spines of those who continue to hold traumatic memories of the martial law years. And rightly so, there was an instantaneous response from many peoples' organizations which can now clearly see—thanks to that INQUIRER photo—where FPJ's much vaunted "heart" truly lies.

But wait. Look closely at the photo. For there on the center, framed between our Marcosian personae, is the face of a beaming Juan Ponce Enrile, who, in case we have forgotten, was the Grand Inquisitor of Marcos. Enrile, in case we missed out on the news, has recently "apologized" to the Marcoses for ousting Marcos in Edsa. What a grand *balimbing* deception this guy is putting us into, unless he is now afflicted with incoherent memory which, as the text messages have been saying, is reason enough for voting him out of this election and instead "send him back to the home for the aged."

But I wanted to see more into that picture. And I was particularly searching for the face of Nene Pimentel whose comportment on a Marcos stage should not just be a subject of our curiosity but a basis for our electing him again to the Senate. For Nene, in case we have forgotten, was the subject of the Marcos-Enrile inquisition, and who is now on the same stage with his tormentors. Surrealism has always been the mark of Philippine elections, but to many this is simply stretching the imagination too far.

Fortunately for Nene, his face did not show up on that photo. Still that leaves much for guesswork. Did he dance the *ocho-ocho* with Imee? Was he applauding before the Ilocano public Enrile's apology to Imelda? Did he plant a *beso-beso* on Imelda's tear-stricken face? I would rather close my eyes if I see Nene doing all that. It would be unacceptable.

I was a young student in college when I saw the droves of people who marched on the streets of Cagayan de Oro to denounce Marcos' incarceration of Nene. Then archbishop of Cagayan de Oro, Patrick Cronin, had issued a pastoral letter expressing lament on the arrest of the city mayor. By then, Nene was already languishing in jail in Camp Sotero Cabahug in Cebu.

And so when the street marchers came out in droves, there were no fiery speeches nor agitation propaganda. Nary a sound could be heard beyond the shuffling of feet on the hot asphalt. It was a silent indignation so profound. A statement was being said en masse against Marcos, and it was being said so eloquently. This was the height of martial law and the popular form of discourse was fear. Having gone out this far was a feat of courage for Nene's constituents. That left an indelible imprint on my memory.

The intervening years have blurred that memory. In the beginning there was consistency. The Nene of post-Edsa as the controversial secretary of local government, embroiled in the brouhaha over the appointments of the so-called OICs (officers in charge). That was a time of mayhem for the man, but what mattered most was the removal of several local politicos and warlords identified with Marcos and for which Nene showed mettle. That was an effective "demarcosification."

But the Estrada presidency was no demarcosification. It was, in fact, in more ways than one, a photocopy of the Marcosian brand. Mindanao was besieged by war by a commander in chief who alighted from a helicopter dressed to kill in military camouflage. Hashim Salamat's fortress in Camp Abubakar was taken over, but not before Erap's military feasted on *haram* lechon in an Islamic mosque. And this was the Mindanao which Estrada had touted as "Erap country" during his 40 percent-rating poll-surveyed campaign for the presidency. And that is why Manila-based Tausug Amina Rasul-Bernardo's 2004 pronouncement of Mindanao as "FPJ country" should put us on a reality check.

But Nene was instead palsy-walsy with the pork-feasting and Mindanao-bashing Erap. Erap it was who flew directly to Cagayan de Oro, with no official business on hand but to act as godfather to Coco Pimentel's wedding. But Erap it was too who forlornly crossed the Pasig and was later being fingerprinted in Camp Crame as a pathetic figure in Filipino history, while Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo was being sworn in at Edsa on a microphone that was being held by Nene.

The Filipino psyche is being subjected to jarring merry-go-rounds. We must be used to it by now. We are no longer surprised. But prancing on stage with the Marcoses is unforgivable. Much more so in Mindanao which probably suffered the most under the Marcos-Enrile inquisition.

A colleague in a Mindanao e-mail net, impassioned by the call of "never again" to martial law and who counts Nene as member, posted this query: How come no one has commented about Nene's recent posturings? Is it because his position is now clear to all of us here?

Silence.

* * *

Comments to monta@sni.ph

More on party switching

THE LONG VIEW

Manuel L. Quezon III

IN HIS column "Losers," Conrado de Quiros wrote the following: "Well, to begin with, if the fellow had done his homework, he would have known that it wasn't altogether altruism that drove Quezon to say what he did. Bolting his party was the only way Quezon could fight for bicameralism, which was also the only way he could get past the shadow of Sergio Osmeña Sr. So long as the legislature was unicameral, Osmeña would always be the recognized leader. But with a Senate and a House or Representatives, Quezon could become Senate president and challenge Osmeña's leadership from that position of power. Which he did, eventually becoming the new top dog."

De Quiros said, correctly, that it wasn't altogether altruism that drove Quezon to say what he did. But unfortunately, De Quiros hasn't done his homework all that well either. In the hope of clarifying things since De Quiros makes (as always) such good points, let me point out some things. In 1922, when Quezon made his famous soundbite about loyalty to party versus loyalty to country, he was already Senate president (since 1916), and the country was already bicameral. The fight was about whether a bicameral legislature would continue to be run along parliamentary lines, or in a more American manner, which stresses public opinion and caucuses. Naturally, since Osmeña represented the parliamentary inclination, and Quezon the republican one, the question became one of which leader would be on top (Quezon obviously felt he should be on top).

As the Chinese political scientist Dapen Liang put it, "The major issue, over which the two factions battled, was whether or not party leadership in government is advisable. Quezon and his followers in the Senate maintained that there was no need for party leadership at that time in the Philippine government. In a press conference, the president of the Senate declared that he was absolutely opposed to party leadership in government, because he believed that 'it is conducive to oligarchy or autocracy and therefore is undemocratic...' Judging from this premise, the president of the Senate undoubtedly disliked the parliamentary system of government, of which he so peculiarly thought, would lead to undemocratic practice."

A fear (concerning parliamentary government) that, incidentally, is held by quite a few people to this day. Quezon would later on display a certain (to his critics) unusual consistency in later making the case for "partyless democracy" and pushing for the restoration of the bicameral system after the initial defeat of his desire for it to be retained under the 1935 Constitution. Bicameralism was restored in 1941, as a means of applying a brake on the tendency of the unicameral national assembly to be obsessed with local concerns at the expense of national governance; and also because, in the long run, the unicameral system would be easy prey for infiltration by radical elements, and result in encouraging presidents, confronted by an uncooperative assembly, to resort to dictatorship if frustrated.

What is important to stress here is that Philippine democracy is by nature, based on plebiscites: on an issue-by-issue referendum between the leader and the led. Quezon did this, Ramon Magsaysay expressed it best by asking "Can it be defended in Plaza Miranda?", Cory Aquino, as the American writer Lew Gleeck pointed out, was a master of it. The other way is either dictatorship (Ferdinand Marcos, instead of partyless democracy, instituted one-party authoritarian rule), or the purely local horse trading that flourishes in the lower house, and which the lower house wants instituted in parliamentarism. It is a fight between conceptions of governance dating back to Malolos, with local bigwigs wanting a parliament and a neutered presidency as against a strong national leadership which, as Apolinario Mabini hoped, would push the country beyond the tribal instincts of local leaders. It is a strange characteristic of politics today that the House of Representatives is now more dynamic than the Senate; this only shows the chronic lack of genuine national leadership in this country.

When a child observes his father, he only sees the surface; if he doesn't grow up to be a critical thinker and observer, he will only ape what he sees instead of trying to figure out if there's more to things than the surface. In copying the party switching of the past, the leaders of today forget that the public has always distinguished between controversies big enough to justify a switch, and switching merely for the sake of convenience. The electorate takes a longer view of politicians than the politicians take of their constituents. Perhaps not all of the time, but some of the time—enough to frustrate those who abuse the tactic too often.

* * *

Dapen Liang was a Chinese scholar who wrote a history of Philippine political parties published in Hong Kong in 1939 and in San Francisco in 1971. His books remain the best but are out of print. One day I hope to annotate his book and continue it on to the martial law period and beyond. Comments welcome at www.quezon.ph

Pathetic sight

READERS' ADVOCATE

Raul J. Palabrica

LAST week, after a long silence, I got a letter from a reader whom I fondly call "mystery reader." He or she sends me, from time to time, by regular post unsigned, handwritten comments on the INQUIRER's news reports.

The postal stamps on the envelopes indicate that the letters are mailed from Cagayan de Oro City. Judging from the letter content and penmanship, I have a sneaky feeling the reader is a woman with a good education.

The reader's latest letter to me contained a clipping of the photo that appeared on the front page of the April 7 issue of the newspaper. It showed an old man lying in bed, with medical tubes stuck to his nostrils, mouth and arms, and wearing a T-shirt that read "Justice for Filipino WWII Veterans." The day before, the nation marked the 62nd anniversary of the infamous Death March.

Below the picture were the words: "Fighting to the end of his days at the Veterans Memorial Medical Center, Bartolome Gacad carried on to protest the injustice of over 60 years committed against him and fellow veterans. Gacad, 89, died March 5."

The accompanying news report stated that the deathbed photo of retired Col. Bartolome Gacad was a powerful reminder of a controversy that has resonated for six decades, after what military historians have described as one of the worst atrocities of World War II.

Gacad and fellow veterans are fighting for the fulfillment of the promise of financial assistance that the US government gave to the Filipino soldiers attached to the US Armed Forces during the early days of World War II.

Strong message

Referring to the photo, the reader wrote: "Why did you (PDI) have to do this? CRUEL, INSENSITIVE, THOUGHTLESS, DISRESPECTFUL, CARELESS..."

The same photo moved a close friend to call me late in the morning of that day to complain about the propriety of its publication. Aside from making him lose his appetite for breakfast, he thought Gacad's pathetic sight added to the already miserable condition of our war veterans.

I had mixed feelings of anger and pity when I saw that picture. I can only imagine the veterans' frustration and bitterness over the US government's refusal to live up to its wartime commitments to them. Lacking in political clout, they can only protest in silence and grieve by their lonesome until death finally takes its toll on them.

I learned that the photo was meant to send a strong message to the Philippine and US governments to act speedily on the veterans' legitimate demands before they kick the bucket. It fitted into the reporting on the official ceremonies held the day before to commemorate the anniversary of the Death March.

The reader cannot be faulted for his or her critical assessment of the picture. Indeed, at first blush, it looks cruel, insensitive and disrespectful. But a closer look at the rationale for its publication will, in my opinion, justify whatever emotional distress or irritation it may have generated among the readers.

Sometimes, media have to resort to "shock tactics" to jolt the government or the people into action. In the instant situation, time is running out on the thinning ranks of World War II veterans. They may go Gacad's way unless the government undertakes the proper measures to protect their interests.

The INQUIRER regrets if the photo in question upset some readers. But it had to publish it because the occasion called for it.

Columnists

The readers' advocate is tasked with the duty of attending to the complaints of the readers about the accuracy, fairness or objectivity of news reports and photos. On several instances, this column has apologized for errors committed by the editors or reporters in the presentation of news or photos.

The columnists have been exempted from the "gripe list" under the principle that the comments or opinions they express in their columns are personal to them and therefore cannot be put in the same plane as news reports.

Thus, whenever this column receives complaints about articles written by columnists, the letters are simply forwarded to the columnists concerned or, when appropriate, to the Opinion editor for publication in the Letters section. It's up to the columnist to decide if he or she wants to take it up in his or her column or simply ignore it.

This procedure is in keeping with the INQUIRER's policy of giving the columnists a free hand in their columns. They can write on any subject that they may fancy on as long it is within their area of expertise and will not put the newspaper in trouble under our libel laws.

Lately, however, the newspaper has been receiving a lot of complaints about inaccurate data or wrong information that have appeared in some columns. For unexplained reasons, these errors were neither acknowledged nor corrected by the affected columnists in their columns and, if they were, the corrections were done in a tongue-in-cheek manner. The alternative of immediately publishing the letter-complaints in the Letters section is sometimes not feasible due to space constraints.

Starting today, there will be a change in the handling of complaints about the accuracy of statements of fact that appear in the columns. Upon receipt of such a complaint, the readers' advocate will verify its validity. If a correction appears to be in order, copies of the letter will be sent to the columnist and Opinion editor. The columnist will be requested to take up the complaint in his or her column not later than after one "column day."

For example, if the column appears on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday and the error was committed on Monday and the complaint was received on the same day, the columnist will be asked to write about it not later than Wednesday.

In case the complaint is not written about on that day, the complaint will be scheduled for immediate publication in the Letters section or in this column, depending on where space is available without the side of the columnist. The publication will, of course, be subject to the newspaper's usual rules on style, grammar and length.

The columnist concerned can later rebut the letter in his or her column or keep quiet about it. That's up to him or her. What's important is, the correction is made as soon as possible and in as closely prominent manner as the column to which it relates.

* * *

The readers' advocate may be reached at the following address: "The Readers' Advocate" c/o Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Avenue corner Yague and Mascardo Streets, Makati City. Or through fax nos. 897-4793 to 94, or readersadvocate@inquirer.com.ph.

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Evil in 'compromised choices'

CRITICS may exploit Raul Roco's recent US trip for medical check-up at such a crucial time in the presidential campaign, but I am for him as I believe only he can jump-start meaningful reforms in our government. Settling for compromised choices, as largely practiced in previous elections, has led us to nowhere.

The proliferation of surveys only miseducate voters further as they reduce elections to mere popularity contests. They have become tools for unscrupulous elements to "condition" the minds of the majority.

Elections, unlike cockfights, are not merely about winning or losing. Rather, they are excellent opportunities for the still hopeful and concerned citizenry to make a resounding impact and demonstrate their disgust over our political system which has become increasingly infected with cynicism and patronage.

I call on like-minded citizens to make a stand now against these traditional politicians who deftly mouth pro-poor rhetoric to masquerade opportunism for personal gain and obsession to win the next elections. These demagogues are the very reasons why our elections have degenerated into an increasingly expensive and more corruption-inducing popularity and entertainment spectacle.

Don't waste your vote on a candidate you don't believe in only because you think other people will. Our collective idealism can still motivate a significant portion of our voting population into creating a tangible impact in our political system not only in this election but also in the political events that lie ahead.

—FELIX C. REIS,
44 Barlin St., San Roque,
Baao, Camarines Sur

A foreigner on Erap's treatment

THERE is sadness in the hearts of many expats who have always believed in the Philippines as a country that has mastered the art of compromise and face-saving. No more it seems. To throw an aging former president into prison and treat him like a common criminal are an act which shows the world that life in this sun-drenched former paradise is lost. To deny Erap Estrada a few courtesies and to judge him even before he was tried is a tragedy.

The coming elections will be determined on many issues. However, one issue that leaves a large lump in the throat of the common man in the Philippines, in London, Sydney and the rest of the world is why the Philippine government has denied former President Estrada access to water and access to his family in a humane way. Such thing cannot happen in my country.

—KEITH HAMILTON SNELL,
3 Dansalan St., Boni,
Mandaluyong City

Justice for World War II Filipino veterans in America's hands

FOR veterans Segundino Caval and R. Constantino (PDI, 4/12/04) and all Filipino veterans of World War II, the relative inaction of the US government to address their just concerns since the passing of the 1946 Rescission Act is truly dismaying.

President Macapagal-Arroyo has been doing everything within her power to convince the US government to rectify the situation. On her first visit to the United States in 2001, she declared that obtaining full equity for Filipino veterans was high on her agenda. Since then, she has constantly been in touch with President Bush on this issue.

We must realize, however, that it is only the US government that can correct the injustice. The Philippine government cannot do much else except to diplomatically but forcefully urge and exhort the US government to do what is right and to abide by its wartime promises to all Filipinos recruited into the war effort.

During the President's US state visit in May 2003, she again strongly brought up the equity issue with President Bush. In August 2003, she pinpointed the proposed US House of Representatives measure—HR677—that would best give equity to our veterans. In October 2003, during President Bush's state visit to the Philippines, she once again sought the long overdue benefits for our World War II veterans. In January 2004, she pinpointed the counterpart bill of HR677 in the US Senate—S68. She has brought our veterans' claims to the attention of the leaders of the US Congress, aside from President Bush.

The game is now in the ballpark of the US government. It alone has the power to correct the many injustices suffered by our World War II veterans.

We look forward to the day when the US government finally honors its commitment to all Filipino veterans in the United States and the Philippines.

—JESUS TERRY F. ADEVOSO,
presidential assistant
for veterans affairs,
Office of the President,
Malacañang, Manila

MWSS attending to water leaks

THIS refers to the column of Neal Cruz, "Massive leaks in MWSS aqueduct" (PDI, 4/19/04), in which he alleged that nothing has been done about the leaks.

Cruz is right in saying there are leaks along Aqueduct No. 5 (built in 1992) and, if not addressed immediately and properly, Metro Manila residents would have a serious water problem in their hands. However, he may have been misinformed to state that nothing has been done about it.

I would like to inform the public that immediately upon my assumption as MWSS administrator, the initial repair and the subsequent protective works on Aqueduct No. 5 were among the activities on which I focused my attention. Given the gravity of the situation, I immediately advised the President of the situation and presented various options for addressing the problem.

Initially, the MWSS, together with Manila Water and Maynilad, undertook the repair of three major leaks. However, after observing and evaluating the outcome, the experts in the field recommended the construction of a bypass aqueduct—Aqueduct No. 6. While working on the pre-implementation of this by-pass aqueduct, we undertook protective works on the critical five kilometers of Aqueduct No. 5.

The MWSS has already raised the necessary funding for the more crucial Phase 1 of Aqueduct No. 6 (5.5 km). With the assistance of the Office of the President, the Department of Justice and the National Economic and Development Authority, the MWSS has accelerated the pre-implementation process of the project, which normally would take years. To date, four contract packages of the project's Phase 1 have already been awarded. Procurement of necessary materials is about to begin and construction work will start in May 2004.

For Phase 2 (11.5 km) of Aqueduct No. 6, the MWSS has secured a loan for the feasibility study and project design. Procurement of the services of a consultant that will undertake the said study and design is now on-going.

The MWSS regularly updates the President on the progress of Aqueduct No. 5 and Aqueduct No. 6. The executive secretary is constantly monitoring developments on these projects, with the objective of seeing to it that there would be no delay.

—ORLANDO C. HONDRADE,
administrator,
Metropolitan Waterworks
and Sewerage System,
4th Floor, Administration Building,
MWSS Complex, Katipunan Road,
Balara, Quezon City

Why?

PEOPLE too often love things and use people, when we should be using things and loving people.

Honor is better than honors. The Children's Choir of Loboc, Bohol competed in Europe and bested the best of the best, garnering the gold medal and the first prize.

They came back before Christmas but not a single government entity or official met them or honored them. Time and again we honor athletes, giving them money gifts under media glare. But not a whimper for these children who brought international honor to the country. Not even their governor, congressman, mayor met or honored them.

What kind of values do we Filipinos have now? Is it because these are just children of farmers, fishermen, ordinary people? No wonder the Philippines is now in the gutters.

—MANNY REYES,
Cubao, Quezon City

PMAP's choice for president

WE wish to correct whatever wrong impression your newspaper article on our job interview may have created. Our evaluation did not rank the candidates; what we did was to identify the areas where they related significant accomplishments.

We therefore did not say that Bro. Eddie Villanueva was ranked No. 1 in the interview; only that he is included in the shortlist of candidates whom voters should consider and evaluate further. The interview is a pre-qualifying instrument and interview data should be evaluated together with other information that voters have about the candidates.

—OSCAR CONTRERAS,
president,
Personnel Managers
Association of the Philippines

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E-mail: pr_provincial_news@inquirer.com.ph
Assistant Editor Tony Bergonia

VISAYAS BUREAU
c/o Cebu Daily News
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MILF seeks release of 3 JI suspects

COTABATO CITY—The Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) has asked its counterpart in the peace process for the immediate release of three Muslim youth arrested in Datu Odin Sinsuat in Maguindanao who were linked by the military to the regional terror group Jemaah Islamiyah (JI).

"They have no links with the JI or any terror group, they were arrested simply because they were MILF members," MILF spokesperson Eid Kabalu told the INQUIRER.

Denying an Army report that Sammy Abdulgani, 22, of Cotabato City; Munta Tungao, 22; and Puti Ungka, 23, both of Datu Piang, Maguindanao were local terrorists, Kabalu said the suspects have no pending criminal charges.

Citing similar arrests against legitimate MILF members, Kabalu said he was alarmed by the Army's practice of arresting individuals then quickly linking them to the JI even without the benefit of an investigation.

"If it would continue, it would affect the gains of the peace process," he said.

Government and MILF peace negotiators are expected to resume formal peace talks this week in Kuala Lumpur in Malaysia.

Members of the 6th Infantry Division intelligence and the military intelligence company arrested Ungka, Abdulgani and Tungao after one of them yielded a handgun.

Kabalu also described as ridiculous their alleged links with Taufek Refke, JI alleged bagman in Central Mindanao who was arrested last year, "because they do not know Refke, we do not know Refke and have never been associated with him."

Maj. Gen. Generoso Senga, 6th ID chief, admitted that the police and military in his jurisdiction have been on high alert following intelligence reports that regional terrorist group would sow terror on April 30.

The report said the JI plans to bomb Mindanao's major cities simultaneously.

In Cotabato City, the military has arrested a fourth member of an alleged JI cell purportedly planning to sow chaos in Mindanao.

Badrodin Dalunagan was nabbed in his safe house shortly after soldiers arrested his three companions in Barangay Tabiran, Datu Odin Sinsuat town, Maguindanao on Friday. Dalunagan also yielded explosives.

In Basilan, a key Abu Sayyaf member believed to be involved in at least two high-profile kidnappings was arrested by police on Saturday.

Muin Hamja alias Mualib Abdulmuni/Arafat was arrested during an operation in Barangay Kumalarang, Isabela City at around 7 a.m., according to Chief Supt. Joel Goltiao, Philippine National Police spokesperson.

Hamja is facing charges of kidnapping and serious illegal detention. He had a bounty of P150,000.

Chief Supt. Isnaji Bantala, Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao police director, yesterday said the suspect was among the Abu Sayyaf men that staged abductions from four schools on May 27, 2001 and the Dos Palmas kidnapping of March 2000.

In Davao City, President Macapagal-Arroyo lauded the Armed Forces for the arrest of the three JI suspects, who were presented to her and the media at the Davao International Airport yesterday noon. *Edwin Fernandez and Dennis Jay Santos, PDI Mindanao Bureau and Christian Esguerra*

No X-ray machine at Cagayan de Oro airport

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY—While most airports in the country are upgrading their facilities to ensure strict security measures, the Lumbia Airport here has gone back to manual checking of luggages as its x-ray machine broke down in September last year.

Noel Silan, a frequent passenger here, said he was worried because the city has been identified as one of the targets of terrorists.

Other passengers have also complained of the inconvenience during the opening of luggages.

But Hadji Ali, Airport Police Chief, said they do not have money to replace or repair the x-ray machine.

"We have requested for a replacement but funds are not available. Well, the airport is small and we are familiar with all the people around. We rely on our intelligence units around," Ali said.

Ali is only worried about bladed weapons that could not be detected without the x-ray machine. "We just hope it would not pass through the security check," he said.

In Davao City, Mayor Rodrigo Duterte has called the attention of the Airport Aviation Security in Manila to check their security plan against illegal drugs and terrorists.

This following the arrest Friday morning of Mike Umpa and his 14-year-old nephew at the Davao International Airport. The two had in their possession half a kilo of shabu. *Grace Cantal-Albasin and Anthony Allada, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Victims' kin decry neglect by fire bureau, mayor

VALENCIA CITY, Bukidnon—The families of the 12 victims of last year's fire here said justice has been very elusive to them.

During a rally here recently commemorating the first anniversary of the incident, the families of the victims said authorities have been sleeping on their job.

They also accused Mayor Jose Galario of covering up the case.

Elvira Jardinico-Adecer, whose husband and three children perished in the fire, told the INQUIRER that the apparent lack of interest by the local Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP), the police and Galario is sending them the message that the case would never be solved.

"Right after the fire, the BFP assured us not to worry because they already have a lead as to the motive of the case. They said influential people were involved and they were being hunted down. Today, they could not even tell us what is happening with the investigation," she said.

When the fire razed the Jardinico's ancestral house on April 6 last year, Adecer was in Cagayan de Oro City for a baking lesson because she wanted to create a perfect chocolate cake that Antonne, her favorite son, loved to eat. Antonne perished in the fire that also razed 10 other houses.

Galario had denied that the authorities were sleeping on the job.

He told a local radio station that they already considered the case closed after the arrest of at least three suspects.

Galario said the suspects, whom he did not name, had already been charged.

But the families said the suspects, who had been involved in robbery and theft, were fall guys.

Valencia Police Chief Melchor Bedasua said fire authorities were leading in the pursuit of the case.

"One of the suspects was first arrested due to robbery and theft charges but after the tactical interrogation, he was able to mention two names that were allegedly involved in the Jardinico case," Bedasua said.

In the same interview over the radio, Galario said the suspects lighted the liquefied petroleum gas stove so they could see what things to steal inside the Jardinico home. They left the stove on when they fled, he said.

But the Jardinicos said Galario had fabricated the story. *Grace Albasin, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

ROUNDUP

Imported rice seized

GENERAL SANTOS CITY—Police intercepted last Tuesday 157 sacks of imported rice bound for Malungon, Sarangani province. Insp. Hermogenes Abril, chief of Lagao police station, told reporters that the truck driver could not produce documents from the National Food Authority. The truck and cargo were brought to the police headquarter here for safekeeping and further investigation. Dianne Silva, NFA manager here, told reporters that NFA regulation bans the transport of such volume of NFA rice. She confirmed that the rice came from the NFA warehouse, but they were still investigating who was responsible for the release of the rice. *Aquiles Zonio, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Volunteers prepare for polls

CALAPAN CITY—Some 128 volunteers for the Namfrel Quick Count in Oriental Mindoro met on Friday at the Catholic Center Hall in preparation for the May elections. A highlight of the assembly was the simulation activity using the texting technology for election results registration. Department of Education, military and Commission on Elections officers also reported on their respective levels of readiness for the May event.
Madonna Virola, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Teachers vow to help kids

CALAPAN CITY—Some 80 mostly public schoolteachers in Puerto Galera, pledged to help in the prevention of child abuse by making the community a safer place for children through continuing information outreach and education of students and parents. The pledge was made after the teachers' four-day training organized by the Stairway Foundation Inc. that ended Thursday. A number of children, assisted by the Department of Social Welfare and Development and local officials filed cases of pedophilia in the previous months against foreign nationals.
Madonna Virola, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Cheap medicines

PANGIL, Laguna—The Department of Trade and Industry has urged the public to avail of low-cost medicines under its "Presyong Tama, Gamot Pampamilya" program, which aims to give the poor access to commonly prescribed medicines at a cheap price. These are medicines for hypertension, infection, pneumonia, diabetes, asthma and bronchitis. DTI came up with a new set of guidelines that are open to non-government organizations, cooperatives, foundations and other groups who want to serve as outlets for the program. Interested parties in Laguna can coordinate with Ofelia del Monte at (02)892-1061 or (02)818-9801 loc. 361 or Monina Arroyo at (049)559-0254.
Romulo Ponte, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Rebs hold 11 bets captive

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
PDI Visayas Bureau

ILOILO CITY—Suspected New People's Army (NPA) rebels allegedly held captive 11 candidates in Capiz last April 14 and released them after paying at least P50,000 in permit-to-campaign (PTC) fees.

This is the first reported incident where rebels held captive candidates on Panay Island.

Capt. Lowen Marquez, spokesperson of the Army's 47th Infantry Battalion, said the rebels intercepted the entire slate of Honorio Diaz who is running for mayor in Maayon town, around 32 km south of Roxas City. Along with Marquez were his running mate and eight candidates for councilor.

Quoting intelligence reports, Marquez said the candidates included former Capiz Gov. Jose Borda who is running for representative of the first district of Capiz.

But Borda denied he was involved in such an incident saying that he only heard about it from news reports.

"I have not received any demands from them (NPA) and I was not present in the reported incident," Borda, provincial chair of the Lakas-Christian Muslim Democrats, told the INQUIRER in a telephone interview. He, however, confirmed that he met with Diaz's group in the area but left ahead.

The INQUIRER tried but failed to reach Diaz for comment.

Marquez said Diaz's group of around 20 persons were campaigning in the hinterland village of Bongbongan, around 25 km from the town proper of Maayon, when they were blocked by eight armed men in camouflage uniforms at around 1 p.m.

The rebels divested the candidates and their aides of their cellular phones, an Uzi sub-machinegun and a Galil assault rifle. Marquez did not identify the owner of the firearms and only said that they were found in a toolbox in one of the vehicles of Diaz's group.

The candidates were released four hours later, Marquez said, after they gave P50,000 to the rebels.

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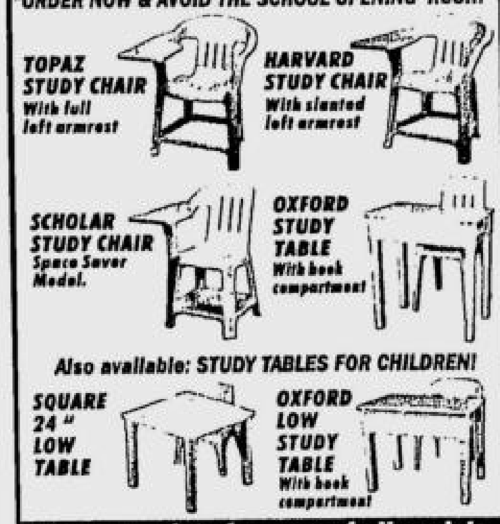
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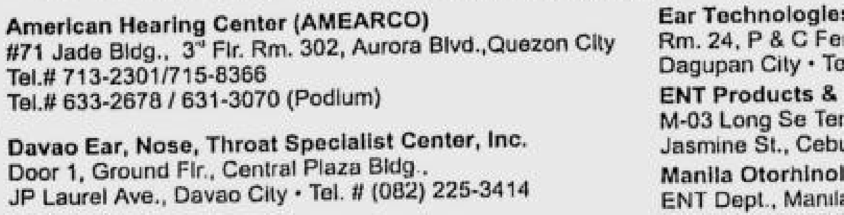
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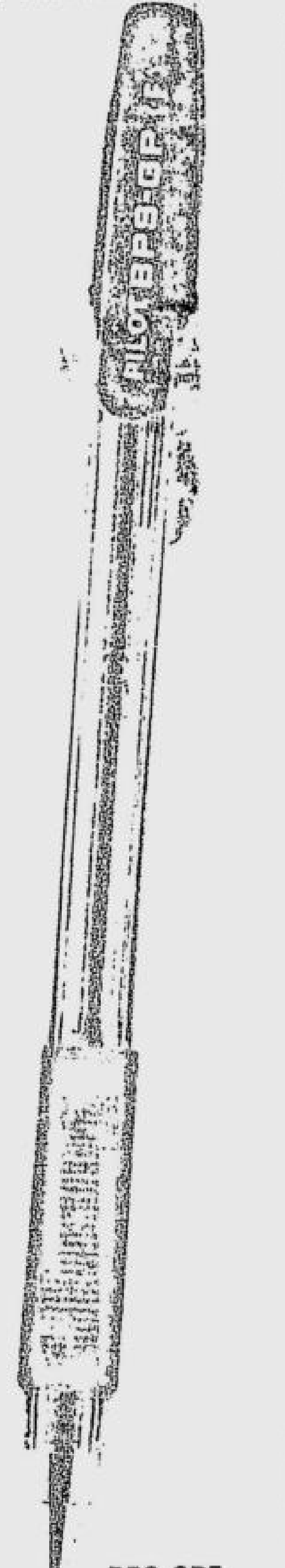

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Across the NATION

MILF seeks release of 3 JI suspects

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Citing similar arrests against legitimate MILF members, Kabalu said he was alarmed by the Army's practice of arresting individuals then quickly linking them to the JI even without the benefit of an investigation.

"If it would continue, it would affect the gains of the peace process," he said.

Government and MILF peace negotiators are expected to resume formal peace talks this week in Kuala Lumpur in Malaysia.

Members of the 6th Infantry Division intelligence and the military intelligence company arrested Ungka, Abdulgani and Tungao after one of them yielded a handgun.

Kabalu also described as ridiculous their alleged links with Taufek Refke, JI alleged bagman in Central Mindanao who was arrested last year, "because they do not know Refke, we do not know Refke and have never been associated with him."

Maj. Gen. Generoso Senga, 6th ID chief, admitted that the police and military in his jurisdiction have been on high alert following intelligence reports that regional terrorist group would sow terror on April 30.

The report said the JI plans to bomb Mindanao's major cities simultaneously.

In Cotabato City, the military has arrested a fourth member of an alleged JI cell purportedly planning to sow chaos in Mindanao.

Badrodin Dalunagan was nabbed in his safe house shortly after soldiers arrested his three companions in Barangay Tabiran, Datu Odin Sinsuat town, Maguindanao on Friday. Dalunagan also yielded explosives.

In Basilan, a key Abu Sayyaf member believed to be involved in at least two high-profile kidnappings was arrested by police on Saturday.

Muin Hamja alias Mualib Abdulmuni/Arafat was arrested during an operation in Barangay Kumalarang, Isabela City at around 7 a.m., according to Chief Supt. Joel Goltiao, Philippine National Police spokesperson.

Hamja is facing charges of kidnapping and serious illegal detention. He had a bounty of P150,000.

Chief Supt. Isnaji Bantala, Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao police director, yesterday said the suspect was among the Abu Sayyaf men that staged abductions from four schools on May 27, 2001 and the Dos Palmas kidnapping of March 2000.

In Davao City, President Macapagal-Arroyo lauded the Armed Forces for the arrest of the three JI suspects, who were presented to her and the media at the Davao International Airport yesterday noon. *Edwin Fernandez and Dennis Jay Santos, PDI Mindanao Bureau and Christian Esguerra*

No X-ray machine at Cagayan de Oro airport

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY—While most airports in the country are upgrading their facilities to ensure strict security measures, the Lumbia Airport here has gone back to manual checking of luggages as its x-ray machine broke down in September last year.

Noel Silan, a frequent passenger here, said he was worried because the city has been identified as one of the targets of terrorists.

Other passengers have also complained of the inconvenience during the opening of luggages.

But Hadji Ali, Airport Police Chief, said they do not have money to replace or repair the x-ray machine.

"We have requested for a replacement but funds are not available. Well, the airport is small and we are familiar with all the people around. We rely on our intelligence units around," Ali said.

Ali is only worried about bladed weapons that could not be detected without the x-ray machine. "We just hope it would not pass through the security check," he said.

In Davao City, Mayor Rodrigo Duterte has called the attention of the Airport Aviation Security in Manila to check their security plan against illegal drugs and terrorists.

This following the arrest Friday morning of Mike Umpa and his 14-year-old nephew at the Davao International Airport. The two had in their possession half a kilo of shabu. *Grace Cantal-Albasin and Anthony Allada, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Victims' kin decry neglect by fire bureau, mayor

VALENCIA CITY, Bukidnon—The families of the 12 victims of last year's fire here said justice has been very elusive to them.

During a rally here recently commemorating the first anniversary of the incident, the families of the victims said authorities have been sleeping on their job.

They also accused Mayor Jose Galario of covering up the case.

Elvira Jardinico-Adecer, whose husband and three children perished in the fire, told the INQUIRER that the apparent lack of interest by the local Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP), the police and Galario is sending them the message that the case would never be solved.

"Right after the fire, the BFP assured us not to worry because they already have a lead as to the motive of the case. They said influential people were involved and they were being hunted down. Today, they could not even tell us what is happening with the investigation," she said.

When the fire razed the Jardinico's ancestral house on April 6 last year, Adecer was in Cagayan de Oro City for a baking lesson because she wanted to create a perfect chocolate cake that Antonne, her favorite son, loved to eat. Antonne perished in the fire that also razed 10 other houses.

Galario had denied that the authorities were sleeping on the job.

He told a local radio station that they already considered the case closed after the arrest of at least three suspects.

Galario said the suspects, whom he did not name, had already been charged.

But the families said the suspects, who had been involved in robbery and theft, were fall guys.

Valencia Police Chief Melchor Bedasua said fire authorities were leading in the pursuit of the case.

"One of the suspects was first arrested due to robbery and theft charges but after the tactical interrogation, he was able to mention two names that were allegedly involved in the Jardinico case," Bedasua said.

In the same interview over the radio, Galario said the suspects lighted the liquefied petroleum gas stove so they could see what things to steal inside the Jardinico home. They left the stove on when they fled, he said.

But the Jardinicos said Galario had fabricated the story. *Grace Albasin, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Rebs hold 11 bets captive

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
PDI Visayas Bureau

ILOILO CITY—Suspected New People's Army (NPA) rebels allegedly held captive 11 candidates in Capiz last April 14 and released them after paying at least P50,000 in permit-to-campaign (PTC) fees.

This is the first reported incident where rebels held captive candidates on Panay Island.

Capt. Lowen Marquez, spokesperson of the Army's 47th Infantry Battalion, said the rebels intercepted the entire slate of Honorio Diaz who is running for mayor in Maayon town, around 32 km south of Roxas City. Along with Marquez were his running mate and eight candidates for councilor.

Quoting intelligence reports, Marquez said the candidates included former Capiz Gov. Jose Borda who is running for representative of the first district of Capiz.

But Borda denied he was involved in such an incident saying that he only heard about it from news reports.

"I have not received any demands from them (NPA) and I was not present in the reported incident," Borda, provincial chair of the Lakas-Christian Muslim Democrats, told the INQUIRER in a telephone interview. He, however, confirmed that he met with Diaz's group in the area but left ahead.

The INQUIRER tried but failed to reach Diaz for comment.

Marquez said Diaz's group of around 20 persons were campaigning in the hinterland village of Bongbongan, around 25 km from the town proper of Maayon, when they were blocked by eight armed men in camouflage uniforms at around 1 p.m.

The rebels divested the candidates and their aides of their cellular phones, an Uzi sub-machinegun and a Galil assault rifle. Marquez did not identify the owner of the firearms and only said that they were found in a toolbox in one of the vehicles of Diaz's group.

The candidates were released four hours later, Marquez said, after they gave P50,000 to the rebels.

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ROUNDUP

Imported rice seized

GENERAL SANTOS CITY—Police intercepted last Tuesday 157 sacks of imported rice bound for Malungon, Sarangani province. Insp. Hermogenes Abril, chief of Lagao police station, told reporters that the truck driver could not produce documents from the National Food Authority. The truck and cargo were brought to the police headquarter here for safekeeping and further investigation. Dianne Silva, NFA manager here, told reporters that NFA regulation bans the transport of such volume of NFA rice. She confirmed that the rice came from the NFA warehouse, but they were still investigating who was responsible for the release of the rice. *Aquiles Zonio, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Volunteers prepare for polls

CALAPAN CITY—Some 128 volunteers for the Namfrel Quick Count in Oriental Mindoro met on Friday at the Catholic Center Hall in preparation for the May elections. A highlight of the assembly was the simulation activity using the texting technology for election results registration. Department of Education, military and Commission on Elections officers also reported on their respective levels of readiness for the May event. *Madonna Virola, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Teachers vow to help kids

CALAPAN CITY—Some 80 mostly public schoolteachers in Puerto Galera, pledged to help in the prevention of child abuse by making the community a safer place for children through continuing information outreach and education of students and parents. The pledge was made after the teachers' four-day training organized by the Stairway Foundation Inc. that ended Thursday. A number of [illegible] assisted by the Department of Social Welfare and Development and local officials filed cases of pedo[illegible] in the previous months against foreign nationals. *Madonna Virola, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Cheap medicines

PANGIL, Laguna—The Department of [illegible] dustry has urged the public to avail of lo[illegible] medicines under its "Presyong Tam[illegible] pamilya" program, which ai[illegible] to commonly prescribed medi[illegible]. These are medicines for hypertension, infection, [illegible]monia, diabetes, asthma and bronchitis. DTI can[illegible] with a new set of guidelines that are open to non-government organizations, cooperatives, foundations and other groups who want to serve as outlets for the program. Interested parties in Laguna can coordinate with Ofelia del Monte at (02)892-1061 or (02)818-[illegible] loc. 361 or Monina Arroyo at (049)559-025[illegible]. *Romulo Ponte, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

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Republic of the Philippines
Department of Science and Technology
Science Education Institute

4,545 PASS 2004 S&T SCHOLARSHIP EXAM

Continuation from yesterday

4,545 high school graduates who qualified after taking the S&T Scholarship Examination last November may now avail of the slots available for the RA 7687 Scholarships and DOST-SEI Merit Scholarships, Secretary Estrella Alabastro of the Department of Science and Technology (DOST) announced. This year's qualifiers to the DOST-SEI S&T Scholarship Programs were chosen among 21,305 examinees from the various regions nationwide.

4,193 qualified under the 2004 RA 7687 Scholarships, while 352 will be awarded with the DOST-SEI Merit Scholarships. The scholarship privileges for both programs include school fees, book and transportation allowances and monthly stipend, among others.

The qualifiers will receive a notice of scholarship award from DOST-SEI which will include the schedule when the qualifier is supposed to report for contract signing and orientation with his/her parents. The documents required for the contract signing are : original and clear photocopy of Birth Certificate; accompanying parent's 2004 Residence Certificate and P50 notarization fee .

The Science Education Institute (SEI), a service agency of the DOST, administers the S&T Scholarship Programs designed as a capacity-building strategy to boost the country's scientific and technological human resource for the industries, research institutions and the academe. Aside from the benefits provided by the scholarship, scholars are also developed and prepared for leadership, quality performance and future employment through trainings, job fairs and referrals.

The names of qualifiers with question(s) on their citizenships are being withheld for further verification. Following are the qualifiers for the 2004 S&T Scholarships: (also available online thru: www.science-scholarships.ph.)

2004 DOST-SEI MERIT QUALIFIERS
2004 RA 7687 QUALIFIERS

METRO MANILA
ABAG, IVMORY TUAYON
ABARETA, JEFFERSON OLITOQUIT
ABDON, JEFFREY ALFON
ABECILLA, NESJOHN LORENZO
ABEJERO, SARAH ROBLE
ABELADA, MARK LOUIE FAJARDO
ABENOJA, DIANE KRISTEL SALON
ABONGAN, FATIMA DORUELO
ACUPANG, REX HUMPREY NIETO
ADA CRUZ, MARK ANDREW CONCEPCION
ADAN, EVALYN BITO
ADAO, DAVID SEBASTIAN CASTELO
AGASIN, GLENN NOEL ALBERTO
AGONOS, MARK ANTHONY LOPEZ
AGUS, CLARISSE ANN GALALANG
AGUSTIN, MARK JOSEPH ALCANAR
ALAG, MA. THERESA ANGELINE ADA CRUZ
ALAY, PAUL JOSHUA TAMANIO
ALCOBER, BRYAN MORILLA
ALEGRE, BONNEL GAYAHAN
ALEGRE, MARK JOSEPH CLASAY
ALEJANDRE, MARIA CRISTINA MUSICO
ALQUERO, RANDY ESDICUL
ALVAREZ, LARRY MACIAS
ANASCUAL, LA BADAL
AMBIDA, JULIE ROSE OLIVAR
AMORSOLO, SYLVESTRE UY
ANDRADE, JOANNA ALCODIA
ANG, UNICA CORDOVILLA
ANTONA, MARICEL DELA PAZ
ANTONIO, ROBERT JOSEPH CAPARANGA
ARAGON, BERLIN MATIENZO
ARELLANO, ARLENE CATACUTAN
ARPON, ALVIN BERMAS
ARQUILADO, MELISSA BARRERA
ASIATICO, REGIE VILLA
ASIERTO, ARMANDO ASOTIGUE
ASISTIO, ROBIN JAKE MORA
ASUNCION, BERNARD JAY BARTOLOME
ASUNCION, BRYAN RAY BARTOLOME
AURELIO, JO ANNE CRYSTAL TOLEDO
AUSENA, SUSANA KARMELA ANDES
BACOLOD, ABRA JOYCE BANTUTAY
BACSAL, ANGEL CARUTAAN
BAGUHIN, GENESIS DE GUZMAN
BAJADE, RUTHSELL BEDIA
BALAGAT, ALMAMIRA ARBOIS
BALLESTEROS, ELLENE MARIE ANGELES
BALSA, ELLA MARIE CRUZ
BALTAZAR, CHRISTOPHER PAULO MACANDOG
BARCELON, JONATHAN GAYONDATO
BARRECANTE, MYRENCE TERE
BARINQUE, MICHAEL FRANCIS DAYUTA
BARSANA, KAREN GERMONES
BARTOLOME, ABIGAIL PINEDA
BARTOLOME, ARLENE PINEDA
BASINGAN, MANOLO JR. LAGADIN
BASTES, DEBORAH RUTH SILVANO
BATAS, JEZABELLE OMAPOY
BAUTISTA, DANIELLE ANNE CERENO
BAUTISTA, MARCO PAULO LIM

KEM ING, MARK ANTHONY TABO
LABIOS, PAMELA LUZ CO
LAMBINO, JEMLALINE SINFUEGO
LANDICHO, JUENESSES SARCO
LANDINGIN, GIL III TONGALA
LANDISCHAN, ERIKA HAZEL SANTOS
LAO, MAYRALINA LLANTO
LATUMBO, ERICA ADRIANO
LAURENCE, RAMIR SAÑOTA
LAZARO, LITO RODEL SIGGAYO
LEOMO, VICTORIA NASTASSA MEJIA
LIBAO, RHEMY'S LABASTIDA
LLANES, CHRISTIAN ARIS ENCINARES
LLENO, CHRISTIAN DEMANARIG
LORILLA, RICHARDSON BELTRAN
LOZADA, KRISTINE ANN ITCHON
MACAPUGAY, RAYMOND VIZARRA
MACARAEG, KEZIAH BARCELON
MACAWILE, ROSELYN GARCIA
MADAYAG, SHERWIN KENNETH TERRADO
MAG ISA, JULIUS BERNIE PEREZ
MAGALONA, JAY GAGAP
MAGASO, LORD NIKKO SEMINIANO
MALANAY, JOSEPH MARI
MALDOS, MARVIN HENSON
MALVEDA, JASON ACEBILLO
MAMANTA, JAN RAISHAEL MARANAN
MANALIGOD, DIVINE ROSE FUNENDA
MANANSALA, KARL MARK BARROS
MANAOIS, DENNIS ANDAYA
MANDAPAT, JHOANA MARIE JARAMILLA
MANDRAS, RICHARD CUAN
MANGAHAS, NOAH BERNARDINO
MANGAPIT, MARY MAE OCRETO
MARTIN, KRIZZALYN CANTORIA
MATABANG, JERICA IMMERI PASCUAL
MENDOZA, DARRYL BUSANA
MERAÑA, MARIA LATRINA SULTAN
MESOGA, RYAN PONAL
MIRANDA, JAMES PAUL YANG
MIRANDA, JOSEPH CARLO ALUDINO
MISTIOLA, GRACELYN MIRASOL
MOISES, BRYAN CARLO SAGA
MONDRAGON, FLORIZZA ESTRAÑERO
MONTESO, MA. THERESA GENEROSO
MORADO, CRESSA REPONGOY
MORLA, REGGIE RUAN
NACPOPA, MARIBETH CANALES
NACIS, GERLEY JUANICO
NALUNDASAN, JULIUS DELOS SANTOS
NARAG, JUNE ANN MALAGA
NARCELLES, MASSIVEL JOY DIZON
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NAVAMOS, ROCHE ESPARTERO
NEGRILLO, NOEMI ROXAS
NENE, JESSICA ABLA
NULADA, FRED LERVIN FACON
NUNEZ, LESTRA NIEVA
OBIAS, NORLENS PAUL MARCHAN
OBSEQUIO, JULIE ANN OLAYBAL
OCAMPO, SARAH LASUY
OLARTE, CYDWIN GABILLOS

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Student's killing mars UPLB graduation rites

By Marlon Ramos
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

LOS BAÑOS, Laguna—For nine long years, agriculture student Vergel Aquino struggled hard for his turn to take the stage, donned in his toga, as he brings home the much desired college diploma from the University of the Philippines at Los Baños and make his parents in Lucena City proud of his achievement.

He could have fulfilled his dream. Unfortunately, he was killed just 36 hours short of fully realizing it.

On Friday, a day and a half before his graduation, Aquino, 26, was allegedly stabbed to death by suspect Aaron Carlo Cabrera and two other suspected members of the Tau Gamma Phi Fraternity along the main road of the Demarses Subdivision, some 50 meters away from the UPLB campus.

The motive: An argument over their "affairs of the heart."

Chief Inspector Potenciano Escobel, town police chief, said Aquino died from at least seven stab wounds on his chest and other parts of the body. He said Aquino was with another victim, Francis Dijan, when the incident took place at around 3 a.m.

Escobel said unidentified assailants threw a "pillbox" at the apartment inside the subdivision where Aquino and his brods from the Pi Sigma Fraternity were staying a few hours before the incident took place.

He said the victims checked out where the bomb came from and were walking back home when they came across the suspects and a fight ensued.

Escobel maintained that although the victims belonged to another group, the police dismissed earlier reports that said the incident was frat-related.

Witnesses and records from the UPLB police showed that the two fraternities have never been against each other. But there were circumstancial pieces of evidence that would prove that the suspect had a quarrel with the victim, Escobel said.

"It was almost a life-long dream for us. We really waited for his graduation from UPLB," lamented Vergel's mother Cristina. "But it all ended in a moment. It was a senseless death. Now our dream is gone forever."

Love angle

Dijan, who suffered a lone stab wound on his back, told the INQUIRER that he and other frat members noticed that Aquino looked irate when he arrived at their apartment on Thursday.

When they asked Aquino what the matter was, he supposedly told them that he was having a quarrel with his former girlfriend.

"He said the girl was sending him foul text messages. But (Aquino) began to suspect that it was actually her current boyfriend (Cabrera) who was texting him. That really infuriated him," Dijan said.

Cabrera, an engineering student also at UPLB, is now the subject of a police manhunt.

Escobel noted that Aquino received threats allegedly sent by Cabrera. He said they will file murder charges against Cabrera and the two other suspects and invite residents in the area who could provide information about the identities of the two suspects.

Despite his death, the dean of the UPLB College of Agriculture, Dr. Candida Adalla read his name as among the graduates of 2004. The graduating class, composed of 1,811 graduates, condemned the murder of one of their batch mates.

Youth party-list nominee linked to killing of rebel arrested

DUMAGUETE CITY—The police here have arrested the Anak Bayan Youth Party-list nominee Ronald Ian Evidente Wednesday after he was linked to the killing last year of a member of the Revolutionary Proletarian Army-Alex Boncayao Brigade.

Evidente, 25, is facing murder charges for the killing of Erlito Babor Potestas, 46, in Barangay Talalac, Sta. Catalina, Negros Oriental last Dec. 16.

Evidente, the vice chair of the Anak Bayan in Negros Oriental, is the fifth nominee of the Anak Bayan, which is seeking party-list representation in the House of Representatives in the May 10 elections.

Evidente was identified by Potestas' wife, Dolores, as one of those seen with armed men, believed to be New People's Army (NPA) rebels, who allegedly went to Sitio Kakha, introducing themselves as soldiers from the Army's 61st Infantry Battalion.

Dolores Potestas, in her affidavit, claimed Evidente along with a certain Lumen de la Cruz, tied her husband's hands and later ordered De la Cruz to shoot Potestas.

Sta. Catalina Municipal Trial Court Judge Rogaciano Rivera issued a warrant for the arrest of Evidente and Lumen de la Cruz, Misael de la Cruz, Tony boy de la Cruz, Fortunato Jamilla and other John Does. No bail was set.

Evidente denied knowing Lumen de la Cruz and the other respondents in the murder case and said the case is fabricated.

Alex Pal, PDI Visayas Bureau

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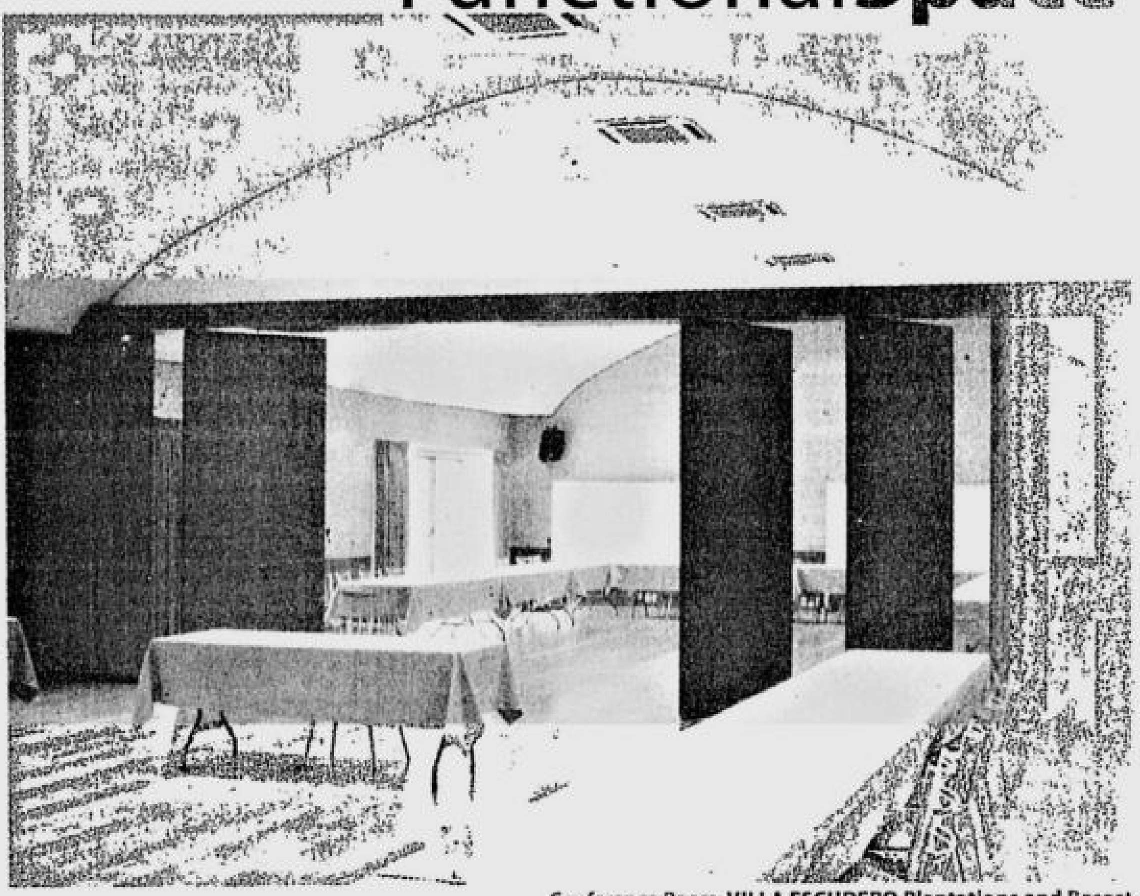

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EN BANC

A.M. No. 03-06-13-SC
CODE OF CONDUCT FOR COURT PERSONNEL

WHEREAS, the dispensation of justice is the basic duty and responsibility of the Judiciary as enshrined in the Constitution; it is a sacred task of divine origin.

WHEREAS, the Constitution declares that a public office is a public trust, and all public officers and employees must at all times be accountable to the people, serve them with utmost responsibility, loyalty and efficiency, act with patriotism and justice, and lead modest lives.

WHEREAS, court personnel, from the lowliest employee to the clerk of court or any position lower than that of a judge or justice, are involved in the dispensation of justice, and parties seeking redress from the courts for grievances look upon court personnel as part of the Judiciary.

WHEREAS, in performing their duties and responsibilities, court personnel serve as sentinels of justice and any act of impropriety on their part immeasurably affects the honor and dignity of the Judiciary and the people's confidence in it.

WHEREAS, while there are statutory provisions and Civil Service rules governing the ethical conduct of government officials and employees, there is a need to adopt norms of conduct that are specific to personnel in the Judiciary because of the special nature of their duties and responsibilities.

WHEREAS, at its third meeting in Colombo, Sri Lanka, in January of 2003, the Judicial Group on Strengthening Judicial Integrity, which had earlier approved the Bangalore Principles of Judicial Conduct, submitted for consideration of the participating Chief Justices, including the Chief Justice of the Philippines, a Code of Conduct for Judicial Employees.

WHEREAS, the Code of Conduct for Judicial Employees was refined through various amendments, including those introduced by the Chief Justice of the Philippines, to serve as a model Code of Conduct for judicial employees or court personnel.

WHEREAS, the Constitution of the Philippines vests in the Supreme Court administrative supervision over all courts and their personnel; thus, it has disciplinary authority over them and the power to promulgate a code of conduct for them.

NOW, THEREFORE, the **SUPREME COURT** *En Banc* hereby **PROMULGATES** this

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR COURT PERSONNEL

SCOPE

SECTION 1. This Code of Conduct for Court Personnel shall apply to all personnel in the Judiciary who are not justices or judges. Court personnel who are no longer employed in the Judiciary but who acquired, while still so employed, confidential information as defined in the second paragraph of Section 1 of Canon II on Confidentiality are subject to Section 4 thereof.

CANON I

FIDELITY TO DUTY

SECTION 1. Court personnel shall not use their official position to secure unwarranted benefits, privileges or exemptions for themselves or for others.

SEC. 2. Court personnel shall not solicit or accept any gift, favor or benefit based on any or explicit or implicit understanding that such gift, favor or benefit shall influence their official actions.

SEC. 3. Court personnel shall not discriminate by dispensing special favors to anyone. They shall not allow kinship, rank, position or favors from any party to influence their official acts or duties.

SEC. 4. Court personnel shall not accept any fee or remuneration beyond what they receive or are entitled to in their official capacity.

SEC. 5. Court personnel shall use the resources, property and funds under their official custody in a judicious manner and solely in accordance with the prescribed statutory and regulatory guidelines or procedures.

CANON II

CONFIDENTIALITYt

SECTION 1. Court personnel shall not disclose to any unauthorized person any confidential information acquired by them while employed in the Judiciary, whether such information came from authorized or unauthorized sources.

Confidential information means information not yet made a matter of public record relating to pending cases, as well as information not yet made public concerning the work of any justice or judge relating to pending cases, including notes, drafts, research papers, internal discussions, internal memoranda, records of internal deliberations, and similar papers.

The notes, drafts, research papers, internal discussions, internal memoranda, records of internal deliberations and similar papers that a justice or judge uses in preparing a decision, resolution or order shall remain confidential even after the decision, resolution or order is made public.

SEC. 2. Confidential information available to specific individuals by reason of statute, court rule or administrative policy shall be disclosed only by persons authorized to do so.

SEC. 3. Unless expressly authorized by the designated authority, court personnel shall not disclose confidential information given by litigants, witnesses or attorneys to justices, judges or any other person.

SEC. 4. Former court personnel shall not disclose confidential information acquired by them during their employment in the Judiciary when disclosure by current court personnel of the same information would constitute a breach of confidentiality. Any disclosure in violation of this provision shall constitute indirect contempt of court.

CANON III

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

SECTION 1. Court personnel shall avoid conflicts of interest in performing official duties. Every court personnel is required to exercise utmost diligence in being aware of conflicts of interest, disclosing conflicts of interest to the designated authority, and terminating them as they arise.

(a)A conflict of interest exists when:

- (i)the court personnel's objective ability or independence of judgment in performing official duties is impaired or may reasonably appear to be impaired; or
- (ii) the court personnel, the personnel's immediate family, or the personnel's business or other financial interest would derive financial gain because of the personnel's official act.

(b)No conflict of interest exists if any benefit accrues to the court as a member of a profession, business, or group to the same extent as any other member of such profession, business, or group who does not hold a position in the Judiciary.

(c)The term "immediate family" shall include the following whether related by blood, marriage or adoption: (a) spouse, (b) children, (c) brother, (d) sister, (e) parent, (f) grandparent, (g) grandchildren, (h) father-in-law, (i) mother-in-law, (j) sister-in-law, (k) brother-in-law, (l) son-in-law, (m) daughter-in-law, (n) stepfather, (o) stepmother, (p) stepson, (q) stepdaughter, (r) stepbrother, (s) stepsister, (t) half-brother, and (u) half-sister.

SEC. 2. Court personnel shall not:

(a)Enter into any contract with the Judiciary for services, lease or sale of property apart from the employment contract relating to the personnel's position, nor use that position to assist any member of the personnel's immediate family in securing a contract with the Judiciary in a manner not available to any other interested party.

(b)Receive tips or other remuneration for assisting or attending to parties engaged in transactions or involved in actions or proceedings with the Judiciary.

(c)Participate in any official action involving a party with whom either the court personnel or any member of the personnel's immediate family is negotiating for future employment.

(d)Knowingly employ or recommend for employment any member of the court personnel's immediate family.
(e)Solicit or accept any gift, loan, gratuity, discount, favor, hospitality or service under circumstances from which it could reasonably be inferred that a major purpose of the donor is to influence the court personnel in performing official duties.

SEC. 3. Nothing in Section 2 above shall prohibit court personnel from (a) accepting a public award presented in recognition of public services, (b) receiving a commercially reasonable loan made as part of the ordinary transaction of the lender's business; (c) donating to the Judiciary for the benefit of a group of court personnel (e.g. all the personnel of an office or unit of the Judiciary): Provided, that the value and circumstances of the donation are such that it could not be reasonably inferred that the donation would influence the recipient in performing official duties in favor of the donor or some other party or that such influence was the purpose of the donor.

Finally, nothing in Section 2 above shall prohibit any person, group or entity from donating cash or property of significant or historical value for the benefit of the Judiciary. Provided, that, such donation is received on behalf of the Judiciary by the designated authority.

SEC. 4. To insure compliance with the provisions of this canon on Conflict of Interest, court personnel who have authority to enter into or approve contracts for the Judiciary shall file a financial disclosure statement with the designated authority at the beginning and upon termination of employment in such position, and annually while so employed. The disclosure shall follow the guidelines established by the designated authority, and shall include all sources of personal and business income, including investments in personal or real property, as well as all income received by their spouses or dependent children.

SEC. 5. The full-time position in the Judiciary of every court personnel shall be the personnel's primary employment. For purposes of this Code, "primary employment" means the position that consumes the entire normal working hours of the court personnel and requires the personnel's exclusive attention in performing official duties.

Outside employment may be allowed by the head of office provided it complies with all of the following requirements.

(a)The outside employment is not with a person or entity that practices law before the courts or conducts business with the Judiciary.

(b) The outside employment can be performed outside of normal working hours and is not incompatible with the performance of the court personnel's duties and responsibilities.

(c) The outside employment does not require the practice of law; Provided, however, that court personnel may render services as professor, lecturer, or resource person in law schools, review or continuing education centers or similar institutions.

(d) The outside employment does not require or induce the court personnel to disclose confidential information acquired while performing official duties, and

(e) The outside employment shall not be with the legislative or executive branch of government, unless specifically authorized by the Supreme Court.

Where a conflict of interest exists, may reasonably appear to exist, or where the outside employment reflects adversely on the integrity of the Judiciary, the court personnel shall not accept the outside employment.

CANON IV

PERFORMANCE OF DUTIES

SECTION 1. Court personnel shall at all times perform official duties properly and with diligence. They shall commit themselves exclusively to the business and responsibilities of their office during working hours.

SEC. 2. Court personnel shall carry out their responsibilities as public servants in as courteous a manner as possible.

SEC. 3. Court personnel shall not alter, falsify, destroy or mutilate any record within their control.

This provision does not prohibit amendment, correction or expungement of records or documents pursuant to a court order.

SEC. 4. In performing official duties, court personnel shall not discriminate nor manifest, by word or conduct, bias or prejudice based on race, religion, national or ethnic origin, gender or political affiliation.

SEC. 5. Court personnel shall not recommend private attorneys to litigants, prospective litigants, or anyone dealing with the Judiciary.

SEC. 6. Court personnel shall expeditiously enforce rules and implement orders of the court within the limits of their authority.

SEC. 7. Court personnel shall not be required to perform any work or duty outside the scope of their assigned job description.

INCORPORATION OF OTHER RULES

SECTION 1. All provisions of law, Civil Service rules, and issuances of the Supreme Court governing or regulating the conduct of public officers and employees applicable to the Judiciary are deemed incorporated into this Code.

EFFECTIVITY

SECTION 1. This Code shall take effect on the first day of June, 2004, and shall be published in a newspaper of general circulation not later than the fifteenth day of May, 2004.

HILARIO G. DAVIDE, JR.
Chief Justice

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Associate Justice

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Student's killing mars UPLB graduation rites

By Marlon Ramos
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

LOS BAÑOS, Laguna—For nine long years, agriculture student Vergel Aquino struggled hard for his turn to take the stage, donned in his toga, as he brings home the much desired college diploma from the University of the Philippines at Los Baños and make his parents in Lucena City proud of his achievement.

He could have fulfilled his dream. Unfortunately, he was killed just 36 hours short of fully realizing it.

On Friday, a day and a half before his graduation, Aquino, 26, was allegedly stabbed to death by suspect Aaron Carlo Cabrera and two other suspected members of the Tau Gamma Phi Fraternity along the main road of the Demarses Subdivision, some 50 meters away from the UPLB campus.

The motive: An argument over their "affairs of the heart."

Chief Inspector Potenciano Escobel, town police chief, said Aquino died from at least seven stab wounds on his chest and other parts of the body. He said Aquino was with another victim, Francis Dijan, when the incident took place at around 3 a.m.

Escobel said unidentified assailants threw a "pillbox" at the apartment inside the subdivision where Aquino and his brods from the Pi Sigma Fraternity were staying a few hours before the incident took place.

He said the victims checked out where the bomb came from and were walking back home when they came across the suspects and a fight ensued.

Escobel maintained that although the victims belonged to another group, the police dismissed earlier reports that said the incident was frat-related.

Witnesses and records from the UPLB police showed that the two fraternities have never been against each other. But there were circumstancial pieces of evidence that would prove that the suspect had a quarrel with the victim, Escobel said.

"It was almost a life-long dream for us. We really waited for his graduation from UPLB," lamented Vergel's mother Cristina. "But it all ended in a moment. It was a senseless death. Now our dream is gone forever."

Love angle

Dijan, who suffered a lone stab wound on his back, told the INQUIRER that he and other frat members noticed that Aquino looked irate when he arrived at their apartment on Thursday.

When they asked Aquino what the matter was, he supposedly told them that he was having a quarrel with his former girlfriend.

"He said the girl was sending him foul text messages. But (Aquino) began to suspect that it was actually her current boyfriend (Cabrera) who was texting him. That really infuriated him," Dijan said.

Cabrera, an engineering student also at UPLB, is now the subject of a police manhunt.

Escobel noted that Aquino received threats allegedly sent by Cabrera. He said they will file murder charges against Cabrera and the two other suspects and invite residents in the area who could provide information about the identities of the two suspects.

Despite his death, the dean of the UPLB College of Agriculture, Dr. Candida Adalla read his name as among the graduates of 2004. The graduating class, composed of 1,811 graduates, condemned the murder of one of their batch mates.

Youth party-list nominee linked to killing of rebel arrested

DUMAGUETE CITY—The police here have arrested the Anak Bayan Youth Party-list nominee Ronald Ian Evidente Wednesday after he was linked to the killing last year of a member of the Revolutionary Proletarian Army-Alex Boncayao Brigade.

Evidente, 25, is facing murder charges for the killing of Erlito Babor Potestas, 46, in Barangay Talalac, Sta. Catalina, Negros Oriental last Dec. 16.

Evidente, the vice chair of the Anak Bayan in Negros Oriental, is the fifth nominee of the Anak Bayan, which is seeking party-list representation in the House of Representatives in the May 10 elections.

Evidente was identified by Potestas' wife, Dolores, as one of those seen with armed men, believed to be New People's Army (NPA) rebels, who allegedly went to Sitio Kakha, introducing themselves as soldiers from the Army's 61st Infantry Battalion.

Dolores Potestas, in her affidavit, claimed Evidente along with a certain Lumen de la Cruz, tied her husband's hands and later ordered De la Cruz to shoot Potestas.

Sta. Catalina Municipal Trial Court Judge Rogaciano Rivera issued a warrant for the arrest of Evidente and Lumen de la Cruz, Misael de la Cruz, Tony boy de la Cruz, Fortunato Jamilla and other John Does. No bail was set.

Evidente denied knowing Lumen de la Cruz and the other respondents in the murder case and said the case is fabricated.

Alex Pal, PDI Visayas Bureau

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Republic of the Philippines
Supreme Court
Baguio City

EN BANC

A.M. No. 03-06-13-SC
CODE OF CONDUCT FOR COURT PERSONNEL

WHEREAS, the dispensation of justice is the basic duty and responsibility of the Judiciary as enshrined in the Constitution; it is a sacred task of divine origin.

WHEREAS, the Constitution declares that a public office is a public trust, and all public officers and employees must at all times be accountable to the people, serve them with utmost responsibility, loyalty and efficiency, act with patriotism and justice, and lead modest lives.

WHEREAS, court personnel, from the lowliest employee to the clerk of court or any position lower than that of a judge or justice, are involved in the dispensation of justice, and parties seeking redress from the courts for grievances look upon court personnel as part of the Judiciary.

WHEREAS, in performing their duties and responsibilities, court personnel serve as sentinels of justice and any act of impropriety on their part immeasurably affects the honor and dignity of the Judiciary and the people's confidence in it.

WHEREAS, while there are statutory provisions and Civil Service rules governing the ethical conduct of government officials and employees, there is a need to adopt norms of conduct that are specific to personnel in the Judiciary because of the special nature of their duties and responsibilities.

WHEREAS, at its third meeting in Colombo, Sri Lanka, in January of 2003, the Judicial Group on Strengthening Judicial Integrity, which had earlier approved the Bangalore Principles of Judicial Conduct, submitted for consideration of the participating Chief Justices, including the Chief Justice of the Philippines, a Code of Conduct for Judicial Employees.

WHEREAS, the Code of Conduct for Judicial Employees was refined through various amendments, including those introduced by the Chief Justice of the Philippines, to serve as a model Code of Conduct for judicial employees or court personnel.

WHEREAS, the Constitution of the Philippines vests in the Supreme Court administrative supervision over all courts and their personnel; thus, it has disciplinary authority over them and the power to promulgate a code of conduct for them.

NOW, THEREFORE, the **SUPREME COURT** *En Banc* hereby **PROMULGATES** this

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR COURT PERSONNEL

SCOPE

SECTION 1. This Code of Conduct for Court Personnel shall apply to all personnel in the Judiciary who are not justices or judges. Court personnel who are no longer employed in the Judiciary but who acquired, while still so employed, confidential information as defined in the second paragraph of Section 1 of Canon II on Confidentiality are subject to Section 4 thereof.

CANON I

FIDELITY TO DUTY

SECTION 1. Court personnel shall not use their official position to secure unwarranted benefits, privileges or exemptions for themselves or for others

SEC. 2. Court personnel shall not solicit or accept any gift, favor or benefit based on any or explicit or implicit understanding that such gift, favor or benefit shall influence their official actions.

SEC. 3. Court personnel shall not discriminate by dispensing special favors to anyone. They shall not allow kinship, rank, position or favors from any party to influence their official acts or duties.

SEC. 4. Court personnel shall not accept any fee or remuneration beyond what they receive or are entitled to in their official capacity.

SEC. 5. Court personnel shall use the resources, property and funds under their official custody in a judicious manner and solely in accordance with the prescribed statutory and regulatory guidelines or procedures.

CANON II

CONFIDENTIALITYt

SECTION 1. Court personnel shall not disclose to any unauthorized person any confidential information acquired by them while employed in the Judiciary, whether such information came from authorized or unauthorized sources.

Confidential information means information not yet made a matter of public record relating to pending cases, as well as information not yet made public concerning the work of any justice or judge relating to pending cases, including notes, drafts, research papers, internal discussions, internal memoranda, records of internal deliberations, and similar papers.

The notes, drafts, research papers, internal discussions, internal memoranda, records of internal deliberations and similar papers that a justice or judge uses in preparing a decision, resolution or order shall remain confidential even after the decision, resolution or order is made public.

SEC. 2. Confidential information available to specific individuals by reason of statute, court rule or administrative policy shall be disclosed only by persons authorized to do so.

SEC. 3. Unless expressly authorized by the designated authority, court personnel shall not disclose confidential information given by litigants, witnesses or attorneys to justices, judges or any other person.

SEC. 4. Former court personnel shall not disclose confidential information acquired by them during their employment in the Judiciary when disclosure by current court personnel of the same information would constitute a breach of confidentiality. Any disclosure in violation of this provision shall constitute indirect contempt of court.

CANON III

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

SECTION 1. Court personnel shall avoid conflicts of interest in performing official duties. Every court personnel is required to exercise utmost diligence in being aware of conflicts of interest, disclosing conflicts of interest to the designated authority, and terminating them as they arise.

(a)A conflict of interest exists when:

(i)the court personnel's objective ability or independence of judgment in performing official duties is impaired or may reasonably appear to be impaired; or

(ii) the court personnel, the personnel's immediate family, or the personnel's business or other financial interest would derive financial gain because of the personnel's official act.

(b)No conflict of interest exists if any benefit accrues to the court as a member of a profession, business, or group to the same extent as any other member of such profession, business, or group who does not hold a position in the Judiciary.

(c)The term "immediate family" shall include the following whether related by blood, marriage or adoption: (a) spouse, (b) children, (c) brother, (d) sister, (e) parent, (f) grandparent, (g) grandchildren, (h) father-in-law, (i) mother-in-law, (j) sister-in-law, (k) brother-in-law, (l) son-in-law, (m) daughter-in-law, (n) stepfather, (o) stepmother, (p) stepson, (q) stepdaughter, (r) stepbrother, (s) stepsister, (t) half-brother, and (u) half-sister.

SEC. 2. Court personnel shall not:

(a)Enter into any contract with the Judiciary for services, lease or sale of property apart from the employment contract relating to the personnel's position, nor use that position to assist any member of the personnel's immediate family in securing a contract with the Judiciary in a manner not available to any other interested party.

(b)Receive tips or other remuneration for assisting or attending to parties engaged in transactions or involved in actions or proceedings with the Judiciary.

(c)Participate in any official action involving a party with whom either the court personnel or any member of the personnel's immediate family is negotiating for future employment.

(d)Knowingly employ or recommend for employment any member of the court personnel's immediate family.

(e)Solicit or accept any gift, loan, gratuity, discount, favor, hospitality or service under circumstances from which it could reasonably be inferred that a major purpose of the donor is to influence the court personnel in performing official duties.

SEC. 3. Nothing in Section 2 above shall prohibit court personnel from (a) accepting a public award presented in recognition of public services; (b) receiving a commercially reasonable loan made as part of the ordinary transaction of the lender's business; (c) donating to the Judiciary for the benefit of a group of court personnel (e g. all the personnel of an office or unit of the Judiciary): Provided, that the value and circumstances of the donation are such that it could not be reasonably inferred that the donation would influence the recipient in performing official duties in favor of the donor or some other party or that such influence was the purpose of the donor.

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SEC. 4. To insure compliance with the provisions of this canon on Conflict of Interest, court personnel who have authority to enter into or approve contracts for the Judiciary shall file a financial disclosure statement with the designated authority at the beginning and upon termination of employment in such position, and annually while so employed. The disclosure shall follow the guidelines established by the designated authority, and shall include all sources of personal and business income, including investments in personal or real property, as well as all income received by their spouses or dependant children.

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(a)The outside employment is not with a person or entity that practices law before the courts or conducts business with the Judiciary;

(b) The outside employment can be performed outside of normal working hours and is not incompatible with the performance of the court personnel's duties and responsibilities;

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CANON IV

PERFORMANCE OF DUTIES

SECTION 1 Court personnel shall at all times perform official duties properly and with diligence. They shall commit themselves exclusively to the business and responsibilities of their office during working hours.

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SEC. 7. Court personnel shall not be required to perform any work or duty outside the scope of their assigned job description.

INCORPORATION OF OTHER RULES

SECTION 1. All provisions of law, Civil Service rules, and issuances of the Supreme Court governing or regulating the conduct of public officers and employees applicable to the Judiciary are deemed incorporated into this Code.

EFFECTIVITY

SECTION 1. This Code shall take effect on the first day of June, 2004, and shall be published in a newspaper of general circulation not later than the fifteenth day of May, 2004.

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Ma. Lourdes J. Villaroman, *Eucalyptus NBO*
Kathryn C. Chua, *Tindalo NBO*
Maria Nita S. Uy, *Market Dev*
Marc M. Franciso, *Cedar NBO*
Ruth E. Isla, *Rosewood NBO*
Jerommel C. Ongcarranceja, *Sequoia NBO*
Lily P. Yu, *Jacaranda NBO*
Jennifer W. Niu, *Palm NBO*
Dinah D. Saberola, *Acacia NBO*
Rebecca Ann K. Sy, *Cypress NBO*
Romeo Y. Arnaez, *Durian NBO*
Ernesto B. Go, *Bristlecone NBO*
Anne T. Chua, *Cypress NBO*
Elena A. Navarro, *Molave NBO*
Jocelyn S. Uy, *Sequoia NBO*
Maria Theresa T. Lei, *Osmanthus NBO*
Rosing A. Dy, *Redwood NBO*
Voltaire D. Balbastro, *Bristlecone NBO*
Eileen T. Haw, *Chestnut NBO*
Lilibeth C. Malbas, *Acacia NBO*
Dorothea T. Chan, *Linden NBO*
Rafael D. Montes, *Palm NBO*
Josefina C. Yu, *Redwood NBO*
Katherine T. Santiago, *Maple NBO*
Robert N. Dytiandu III, *Maple NBO*
James P. Marcelo, *Palm NBO*
Prudencio N. De La Torre, *Magnolia Woods NBO*
Angelina C. Mallari, *Olive NBO*
Maryjane E. Dychauco, *Maple NBO*
Fredeswinda T. Gonzales, *Tindalo NBO*
Eleanor C. King, *Birch NBO*
Rae M. Carabbacan, *Magnolia Woods NBO*
Annalee T. Hilario, *Osmanthus NBO*
Nena T. Ng, *Redwood NBO*
Fely H. Tio, *Jacaranda NBO*
Ceasar B. Pizarro, *Linden NBO*
Gilerose B. Go, *Jacaranda NBO*
Myrna R. Bugnot, *Olive NBO*
Elizabeth L. Agan, *Tindalo NBO*
Jonafe M. Perez, *Banyan NBO*
Zerick M. Colambot, *Acacia NBO*
Elvira V. Monzon, *Aspen NBO*
Elizabeth S. Cheng, *Osmanthus NBO*
Maria Mediatrix Y. Ugbinar, *Osmanthus NBO*
Maria Anela C. Nuñez, *Banyan NBO*
Fely O. Chiu, *Jacaranda NBO*
Nancy L. Pantaleon, *Jacaranda NBO*
Helen C. Chang, *Redwood NBO*
Aida C. Deveza, *Jacaranda NBO*
Billy S. Lao, *Osmanthus NBO*
Gemma S. Cua, *Sequoia NBO*
Shelly Donna N. Pascual, *Jacaranda NBO*
Josephine P. Collado, *Olive NBO*
Cynthia S. Borja, *Jacaranda NBO*
Randie S. Cuña, *Birch NBO*
Willy P. Ramos, *Mulawin NBO*
Elizabeth T. Aguete, *Tindalo NBO*
Robert Yeo, *Maple NBO*
Josefina S. Del Rosario, *Redwood NBO*
Edna A. Duran, *Cedar NBO*
Joventina Milagros W. Ocampo, *Olive NBO*
Iris Divina S. Lorica, *Chestnut NBO*
Ma. Luisa M. Flamiano, *Eucalyptus NBO*
Annie D. Yu, *Osmanthus NBO*
Teresita O. Posadas, *Rosewood NBO*
Noe B. Lumbo Jr., *Mahogany NBO*
William Rañaga, *Palm NBO*
Helen C. Ang, *Aspen NBO*
Benedicta B. Lumbo, *Mahogany NBO*
Sonny H. Burias, *Osmanthus NBO*
Cristino M. Danguclos, *Magnolia Woods NBO*
Linda T. Chua, *Osmathus NBO*
Susan G. Pascual, *Eucalyptus NBO*
Rosario Maria S. Arenas, *Bristlecone NBO*
Leticia D. De Leon, *Magnolia Woods NBO*
George Y. Yap, *Sequoia NBO*
Sonia A. Gan, *Osmathus NBO*
Lily N. Lee, *Tindalo NBO*
Kim Puy S. Chan, *Durian NBO*
Josephine O. Ng, *Osmanthus NBO*
George S. Sy, *Palm NBO*
Jennylyn C. Lo, *Redwood NBO*
Victor V. Deveza, *Jacaranda NBO*
Vilio C. Go, *Molave NBO*
Zenaida S. Tan, *Sequoia NBO*
Josephine Veronique L. Noel, *Cypress NBO*
Lourdes E. Roxas, *Linden NBO*
Carmencita C. Smit, *Tindalo NBO*
Irene C. Tanlimco, *Jacaranda NBO*
Armando E. Legaspi, *Rosewood NBO*
Celine S. Chan, *Sequoia NBO*
Susan R. Lee, *Sequoia NBO*
Virginia W. Lim, *Osmanthus NBO*
Ma. Mercedes Adriano-Townsend, *Olive NBO*
Myrna M. Magallanes, *Cedar NBO*
Nicole Marie P. Fonacier, *Eucalyptus NBO*
Lourdes U. Tan, *Sequoia NBO*
Cynthia M. Abano, *Rosewood NBO*
Reynaldo C. Ong, *Osmanthus NBO*
Dalisay C. Alcaide, *Tindalo NBO*
Shirley T. Enriquez, *Osmanthus NBO*
Angela A. Olivarez, *Eucalyptus NBO*
Ma. Teresita P. Fonacier, *Eucalyptus NBO*
Lenilyn Alonzo, *Jacaranda NBO*
Maria Anna Ruth P. Santiago, *Jacaranda NBO*
Cresencia M. Bamba, *Redwood NBO*

UNIT MANAGERS

Gold Level

Marilou S. Arquero
Chestnut NBO

Diane D. Perfecto
Eucalyptus NBO

Evelyn L. Monzon
Jacaranda NBO

Linda T. Chua
Osmanthus NBO

Jasmine V. Saw
Osmanthus NBO

Angelina C. Lim
Palm NBO

Vincent U. Tiu
Palm NBO

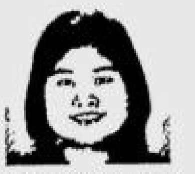
Eloisa M Peñaranda
Tindalo NBO

Virginia S. Ang
Tindalo NBO

Silver Level

Carmelita S. Chua
Eucalyptus NBO

Jocelyn Lim-Pua
Jacaranda NBO


Nanette Natalie S. Yu
Maple NBO

Pamela Ivy S. De Mesa
Mulawin NBO

Zarina L. Caingat
Olive NBO

Bronze Level

Helen C. Ang, *Aspen NBO*
Loretta C. De Austria, *Birch NBO*
Christine Chan-Lee, *Redwood NBO*
Angelita R. Legaspi, *Rosewood NBO*
Celine S. Chan, *Sequoia NBO*
Ellen Y. Ang, *Sequoia NBO*

PURE PRE-NEED

Gold Level

Evelyn S. Bagatan
RMM

Silver Level

Emma E. Eng
RMM

Josefina A De Guzman
RMM

Bronze Level

Judelyn G. Porquez, *RMM*
Jennifer E. Ombrosa, *RDVO*

BRANCH MANAGERS

Silver Level

Evangeline S. Tiu
Palm NBO

Bronze Level

Marita B. Abellera, *Eucalyptus NBO*
Gloria M. Kaw, *Jacaranda NBO*
Josephine P. Collado, *Olive NBO*

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GMA widens lead over FPJ, says poll

From page A1

mer Education Secretary Raul Roco (8.9 percent) and evangelist Eddie Villanueva (5.2 percent).

Some 9.5 percent of the respondents were either undecided or had no answer. The survey, in which the respondents were asked whom they would vote for president if the elections were held last week, had a margin of error of 2.9 percent.

The same survey showed the President's running mate, Sen. Noli de Castro, still leading his colleague, Sen. Loren Legarda, Poe's running mate, in the vice presidential race. De Castro obtained 47.6 percent and Legarda, 35.5 percent.

Roco's running mate Herminio Aquino came in third with 3.6 percent. Some 12.9 percent were either undecided or had no answer.

Influencing choices

As more survey results are released to the public just weeks before the elections, a social scientist warned that opinion polls were unduly influencing the choices of the voters.

Dr. Melba Padilla Maggay, a social anthropologist and president of the Institute for Studies in Asian Church and Culture, lamented that surveys had become a tool for "skewing the entire electoral process" toward the decisive vote for those favored by its ratings.

"While this is not the fault of the pollsters per se, there is need to assess the actual effect of surveys within the peculiarities of our political context. What the survey has become in this country illustrates the fact that tools like this are not, strictly speaking, neutral; they take on meanings and uses depending on a set of social and cultural givens," she said in a comment.

If in other societies poll ratings are mere probabilities, here they have been elevated to the status of "prophecies," Maggay said.

"What in other context is merely projective has become, in our case, uncannily predictive. What is merely an empirical guide to decision-making has been turned into an oracle portentously determining our actions and choices for the future," she added.

On the whole, surveys have eroded the "will to choose candidates on the basis of qualifications intrinsic to themselves," Maggay said. "The survey has become a kind of a gatekeeper, narrowing our options and defining the conditions by which presidential candidates can make it to the finish line. This is skewing democracy."

Classes C and D

Ms Macapagal garnered the most votes in socioeconomic classes C and D, getting 39.3 percent and 39.8 percent, respectively. Poe obtained 17.5 percent of the votes in Class C and 23.2 percent in Class D.

In the AB class, Lacson was ahead with 33 percent. Ms Macapagal got 25.8 percent; Roco, 22.7 percent; Poe, 12.7 percent, and Villanueva, 3.2 percent.

In Class E, Poe obtained the highest votes with 38.2 percent. Ms Macapagal received 29.9 percent; Lacson, 11.7 percent; Roco, 7.9 percent, and Villanueva, 3 percent.

The President trounced her rivals in Metro Manila, Central Luzon, Northern Luzon and the Visayas, obtaining the highest number of votes in these areas, but not in Southern Luzon and Mindanao, where Poe lorded it over her.

In Southern Luzon and Mindanao, Poe obtained 27.3 percent and 37 percent, respectively, compared with Ms Macapagal's 24 percent and 36.3 percent.

JJ Soriano, president of Estore Exchange, which tabulated and encoded the data for NFO Trends, said 300 of the respondents were randomly chosen in Metro Manila, another 300 in the Visayas, and still another 300 in Mindanao.

The survey covered 150 people in Luzon north of Metro Manila and another 150 in Luzon south of the metropolis.

Group seeks P3,000 pay hike for gov't employees

From page A1

whatever adjustments were acceptable to all parties.

The party-list group Partido ng Manggagawa (PM) noted that none of the presidential candidates, except for Ms Macapagal, had spoken on Bawi's demand for a P65 wage increase. In a statement, it challenged the candidates to endorse the workers' demand if they wanted to get their endorsement.

The Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry Inc. (PCCI), one of the country's biggest business groups, is against an increase in the minimum wage.

"We would lose more of our competitiveness if there is an increase in labor cost," said Noemi Saludo, PCCI national president. The chamber has around 20,000 members nationwide.

Saludo, guest speaker at the two-day annual Visayas Area Business Conference in Iloilo City that ended Saturday, noted that the country had one of the highest labor costs among Asian countries. She said any increase in wages would mean fewer investors.

Quality public service

"The issue right now is more employment. But we can only attract investors if our wage level is competitive," said Saludo.

The government, led by Labor Secretary Patricia Sto. Tomas, signed a memorandum of undertaking for quality public service and performance with some government unions on March 22.

The agreement mandated the government to certify a bill in Congress seeking "at least" a 10-percent increase for employees covered by the Salary Standardization Law. Government employees, on the other hand, would seek "peaceful" means of redressing their grievances and would "avoid collective action that would prejudice service delivery."

"This has yet to be deliberated by Congress, which means there is no direct action. It had to take her (Ms Macapagal) three years and an election to recognize that a salary increase had been overdue to government employees," Gaite said in an earlier interview.

"The problem is she neglected her employees despite her first pronouncement when she assumed power in January 2001 that she would respect the bureaucracy, [just like] her father did. What respect has she given us by denying the interest of the employees to a living wage?" he said.

Gaite said the memorandum that was signed with "yellow unionists" was meant to preempt any huge protest actions on Labor Day. Workers usually seek additional benefits or a wage increase during the Labor Day celebration.

The memorandum, which also provided for a revenue measure to cover the cost of the proposed wage increase, was also signed by Chief Presidential Legal Counsel Joe Nathan Tenefrancia and Budget Secretary Emilia Boncodin.

"What Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo did to ... employees warrants absence of support for her. We cannot agree to this kind of governance," he said.

A P3,000 across-the-board salary increase would require P52 billion, which Gaite said the government could raise if it realigned its P400-billion allocation for debt service and military expenditures.

Individual companies

At the Visayas Area Business Conference, Carlos Co, PCCII vice president for the Visayas, said wage adjustments should be left to individual companies and their workers. "Adjustments should be more on productivity rather than labor costs," he said.

Most companies could not afford to raise the wages of their workers because of the sluggish economic performance in 2002 up to the middle of last year, said Robert Go, president of the Cebu Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

"It's (wage increase) wrong timing," added Jose Ng, PCCII governor for Central Visayas. He said many firms would close down if there should be a wage increase.

He said major industries in Cebu like the furniture industry were facing tough competition from China and Vietnam. "As much as we understand the problem of labor groups, we hope they would also understand the problem of businessmen," Ng said.

But the KMU said a wage increase of P125 was reasonable and justified.

"It is actually not enough to cope with the increasing cost of basic goods and services. What we ask for is just a small amount to augment our very measly wages," Joel Maglunsod, KMU secretary general, said.

"For the past three years, workers have been suffering severe financial distress due to the absence of significant wage adjustments. Wages have been eroded by as much as P51.80 since 1999 when we first introduced the P125 across-the-board wage hike demand," he said in a statement.

Maglunsod said employers should recognize the "irrefutable need for urgent wage hikes and they should stop threatening workers with massive joblessness when we press for our right to adequate livelihood." ***With a report from Delfin T. Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau***

Opposition ...

From page A1

Lawyer Melanio "Batas" Mauricio made the appeal after organizers postponed a planned opposition show of force on Labor Day to denounce Ms Macapagal's alleged illegal use of public funds in her campaign.

In lieu of a May Day rally, Mauricio urged people to take part in a day-long prayer and fast.

"This is the only way miracles can happen, according to the Bible," he told the Inquirer. "Secondly, this is the only way to exorcise the demons of government funds misuse by the Arroyo administration."

"We hope the prayers would hit their target—Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo—and that she would put a stop to this."

Red ribbons

Mauricio, who attended a Mass marking the 55th birthday of Alyansa vice presidential candidate Herminio Aquino, also urged the people to place lighted candles at their windows and doors on May 1 "so that the light of God will shine upon us."

Wearing red ribbons and ties "to signify our fight against fund misuse" may also help, he added.

Jaime Galvez-Tan, political strategist of Alyansa's presidential candidate Raul Roco, said he and the other organizers of the abortive rally had yet to decide when and where to hold it.

He earlier said the group planned to hold the rally on another day before the election.

"There's nothing definite about the rally," he told reporters yesterday. But he stressed there was a "wide variety of players" who had signed up to join them.

Malacañang said the President would appeal to the "good sense" of her political rivals to drop their plan entirely because a rally could unsettle the political situation just days before the elections.

"We would prefer that these types of activities that might disturb the prevailing relatively quiet circumstances do not push through," Ms Macapagal's spokesperson, Ignacio Bunye, said on the phone.

Leave it to courts

The President's campaign spokesperson, Housing Secretary Michael Defensor, said on RMN radio the protest rally was uncalled for, considering the issue of alleged funds misuse should be settled by the courts.

Defensor suggested that the opposition just let the voters themselves decide whether the President had illegally dipped into government funds to promote her election.

Two administration allies in the Senate called on the organizers to forget the planned rally.

Senate President Franklin Drilon said the political situation was "already tense and could worsen with the proposed protest rally."

"They know in their heart of hearts that she (Ms Macapagal) will win the elections," Drilon said.

Majority Leader Francis Pangilinan said the challenge to political leaders "isn't so much about presenting to the voters what one opposes or what one is against ... but conveying to the voters what one stands for and what one hopes to achieve."

Reelectionist administration Sen. Robert Barbers warned the mass action could be used by "some imprudent organizations to pounce on the opportunity to destabilize the government."

Opposition reelectionist Sen. Aquilino Pimentel Jr. said he supported the cause of the rally but it should be held on another day other than Labor Day. ***With reports from Gil Cabacungan Jr. and Christine O. Avendaño***

Boy with rare ailment on road to recovery

From page A1

The team was composed of Dr. Adrian Catbagan and Dr. Loreto Fellizar, spine surgeons; Dr. Mike Javier, pediatric pulmonologist; Dr. Susan Padilla Campos, pediatric endocrinologist; Dr. Menchit Padilla, pediatric geneticist; Dr. Cecilia Untalan, pediatric infectious disease specialist; Dr. Edgardo Ortiz, pediatric cardiologist; Dr. Rina Quintos, EENT; Dr. Froilan Inocencio, pediatric ophthalmologist; Dr. Marisa Lukban, pediatric neurologist, and Dr. Sharon Ignacio, rehabilitation medicine specialist.

They were assisted by a big group of nurses, allied health professionals and other health workers.

Kenneth was admitted to the PGH on Valentine's Day, and underwent a six-hour surgery a week later to correct the instability in the C1 (Cervical 1) section of his spine. For the full duration of their ward's hospital stay, Lopez and his team worked in close coordination to ensure a comprehensive approach to Kenneth's condition.

The Inquirer faithfully documented the boy's healing journey. More support flowed in with every story published. By the time he was operated on on Feb. 21, donations had reached over P600,000.

Now Kenneth needs the ventilator (one has been installed in the Villas' small home in Cainta, Rizal) only at night when he sleeps. He is able to move around in a wheelchair and, although he still wears a halo vest to help keep his head stable, he is enjoying an almost entirely new view of the world. Much of this incredible progress could be attributed to the close bond he has formed with Doctor Javier, his pulmonologist.

Javier has shown exemplary devotion in his caring for Kenneth, citing the young patient's resilient spirit, faith, humor and determination. The good doctor would spend an average of two to four hours on the job to ensure that the boy was properly weaned from the ventilator. His reward: Kenneth's full trust.

Happy, optimistic

Asked why he invested so much time in the unusual endeavor, Javier said he was a bit baffled himself. He explained:

"I'm friendly with all my patients but there is really something extraordinary about this boy. He has been through so much in his young life, and yet there is no bitterness in him at all. He remains happy and optimistic. He has a very strong faith in God. When I am with him, I tend to forget my own problems. Here is a boy who just takes everything in stride."

Kenneth calls him "Kuya Doc." In Javier the boy seems to have found a father figure. The relationship has a long way to go for sure, as Javier hopes to get Kenneth completely off the ventilator in the next few months.

During the last two weeks of Kenneth's confinement at the PGH, his aunts and Javier would seat him on the wheelchair and take him to the nearby Robinson's Mall. That was how his hours off the breathing machine improved immensely.

Awed by the new sights and sounds he experienced, Ken seemed to lose track of time and was reminded of the ventilator less and less.

Three days before his discharge, on a trip to the Museo Pambata that was arranged by the PAL Foundation, Kenneth stayed off the machine for a record six hours. His eyes sparkled as he took in the surroundings. It was his very first "long" trip outside the hospital. "I'm determined to get well," he told the Inquirer. "I will help my Kuya Doc in his job."

At the PGH, Kenneth also received a surprise visit from Health Secretary Manuel Dayrit, who had heard about the boy's case from e-groups, and PGH Director Carmelo Alfiler. An interesting sidelight is that Lopez, Javier and Dayrit were all classmates at the University of the Philippines College of Medicine.

One afternoon, Dayrit visited Kenneth and spent close to a half hour chatting with him and his doctors. For his distinguished visitor, the boy played "When You Wish Upon A Star" and "Somewhere in Time" on his toy organ.

A new life

"Heroic," was how Dayrit described Kenneth and Lopez's medical team. "He's such a heroic boy, considering everything that he has been through. His doctors are heroes, too, and most especially his grandmother and aunts who took him under their wing."

Sitting with patients like Kenneth was the best part of being health secretary, Dayrit said, smiling. "Stories like his make the job much more meaningful."

As a whole new chapter unfolds in the courageous little boy's life, he is thankful for all the doctors and the health care workers who have brought him this far. "*Tinulungan nila ako. Tinulungan sila lahat ni* God (They helped me. God helped them)."

A child's simple faith, the devotion of family, the medical expertise of the country's best, and the unwavering support of many generous hearts that came to Kenneth's rescue have performed the veritable miracle together. The brave little one summed up his current state with the certainty of the truly wise: "*Nag-uumpisa pa lang uli ang buhay ko* (My life is just beginning all over again)."

Undecided vote still up for grabs

From page A1

President's lead "is slim." This result is set against the background of a 10.9-percent undecided vote, which swelled by three points following the departure of Raul Roco from his presidential campaign due to illness.

Still, despite the slim margin, the pattern is clear that since the Jan. 16-22 survey, the President has been steadily gaining, and Poe, who had been the front-runner before January, has been sliding downhill. From last December, Ms Macapagal had been struggling as the underdog in the surveys and had fought a remarkable uphill catch-up to overcome her deficit. The April survey reversed the situation. Poe has now to struggle to catch up and regain lost ground.

Questions

In the next three weeks, two questions excite public attention: Can the President sustain her gains and build momentum to pull further ahead of Poe? Or can Poe, who is now trying to catch his breath, give his faltering campaign the second wind it desperately needs?

The survey statistics look grim for Poe. In the January survey, Poe held a wide lead of 9.8 percent over Ms Macapagal, with the President polling second at 26.5 percent to the actor's 36.3 percent. That was the widest gap Poe ever held.

From January, fortunes began to change. Poe fell on slippery slope, sliding to 30.5 percent in February, to 32 percent in March, and back to 30.8 percent in April. The curve is downhill. From January, he lost six percentage points.

By contrast, the President's curve has been ascendant. From January, when she fared at 26.5 percent, Ms Macapagal's ratings plotted a steady and consistent rise. She polled 31.8 percent in February, 31.4 percent in March, and a dramatic 35.3 percent in April. She gained 9.8 percent over four surveys, compared to Poe's six-point loss over the same period.

The picture is that Poe is swimming against a strong current which, at the same time, the President is riding on to give her the edge in the campaign. The turning point came earlier than April, in the two surveys in which they tied.

Roco's departure

The departure of Roco for medical treatment not only dislocated the former education secretary's campaign but caused a shift that helped the President turn the tide. Other than that, other events damaged Poe's campaign.

The longer the campaign wore on, Poe's inadequacies showed up—notably his refusal to engage in a public debate over policies and platform, and his failure to present a coherent program. Moreover, he lost his nerve under the pressure of the campaign, figuring in incidents with the press that revealed his thuggish impulses against intense scrutiny of his platform and plans.

Pulse Asia had earlier picked up signs that Ms Macapagal had overtaken Poe. Its March 27 to April 2004 survey showed that the President had gained a three-point lead with 34 percent over Poe's 31 percent.

Although SWS and Poe conducted separate independent surveys, their findings similarly drew a profile of Poe on the decline and Ms Macapagal on the rise.

The ground shifted with Roco's withdrawal. Roco was pushed from third to fourth place in the survey. He lost half (7 percent) of his 15 points in the previous survey. Ms Macapagal gained four percentage points from the votes that Roco lost, although the shift swelled the undecided vote by three percentage points to 10.9 percent.

The undecided

The undecided vote is up for grabs. How it will be distributed can determine whether the President widens her lead or whether Poe can catch up at all.

With the Roco alliance demoralized, further gains of Ms Macapagal in the surveys could put pressure on Roco's still wavering supporters to make up their minds. They are likely to shift toward the President rather than to Poe.

How Lacson's 10.6 percent will go is a question mark and will be determined by the success or failure of unification efforts in the fractured opposition ranks. At this late stage, there is little sign that the opposition can present a united front before it completely loses the window of opportunity to avert a total meltdown in its campaign that has been plagued for nearly six months with disunity and a series of mistakes, part of which can be blamed on Poe himself.

At this point, it has become increasingly clear that neither Poe nor Lacson is serious in having a fusion. Not only have they failed to meet, they don't seem interested in talking at all. Their negotiations have degenerated into a ridiculous quibbling over whether Poe can send text messages by cell phone.

If they can't even arrange a date, convenient for them to meet, it's pointless to consider terms of concord. The more difficult issues pertain to who will make way—Poe or Lacson—to present a single opposition candidate to take on the President.

No less vexatious is the issue of whether Loren Legarda will quit at this advanced stage of her vice presidential candicacy to make way for Lacson, assuming he steps aside for Poe.

Barring a fusion within the week, already too late, and unless a shattering event intervenes that can drastically change the scenario, the odds are stacked up against the opposition reversing the tide. If we speak of a bandwagon, evidence points to it building behind the President.

GMA widens lead over FPJ, says poll

From page A1

mer Education Secretary Raul Roco (8.9 percent) and evangelist Eddie Villanueva (5.2 percent).

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Roco's running mate Herminio Aquino came in third with 3.6 percent. Some 12.9 percent were either undecided or had no answer.

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Classes C and D

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The President trounced her rivals in Metro Manila, Central Luzon, Northern Luzon and the Visayas, obtaining the highest number of votes in these areas, but not in Southern Luzon and Mindanao, where Poe lorded it over her.

In Southern Luzon and Mindanao, Poe obtained 27.3 percent and 37 percent, respectively, compared with Ms Macapagal's 24 percent and 36.3 percent.

JJ Soriano, president of Estore Exchange, which tabulated and encoded the data for NFO Trends, said 300 of the respondents were randomly chosen in Metro Manila, another 300 in the Visayas, and still another 300 in Mindanao.

The survey covered 150 people in Luzon north of Metro Manila and another 150 in Luzon south of the metropolis.

Group seeks P3,000 pay hike for gov't employees

From page A1

whatever adjustments were acceptable to all parties.

The party-list group Partido ng Manggagawa (PM) noted that none of the presidential candidates, except for Ms Macapagal, had spoken on Bawi's demand for a P65 wage increase. In a statement, it challenged the candidates to endorse the workers' demand if they wanted to get their endorsement.

The Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry Inc. (PCCI), one of the country's biggest business groups, is against an increase in the minimum wage.

"We would lose more of our competitiveness if there is an increase in labor cost," said Noemi Saludo, PCCI national president. The chamber has around 20,000 members nationwide.

Saludo, guest speaker at the two-day annual Visayas Area Business Conference in Iloilo City that ended Saturday, noted that the country had one of the highest labor costs among Asian countries. She said any increase in wages would mean fewer investors.

Quality public service

"The issue right now is more employment. But we can only attract investors if our wage level is competitive," said Saludo.

The government, led by Labor Secretary Patricia Sto. Tomas, signed a memorandum of undertaking for quality public service and performance with some government unions on March 22.

The agreement mandated the government to certify a bill in Congress seeking "at least" a 10-percent increase for employees covered by the Salary Standardization Law. Government employees, on the other hand, would seek "peaceful" means of redressing their grievances and would "avoid collective action that would prejudice service delivery."

"This has yet to be deliberated by Congress, which means there is no direct action. It had to take her (Ms Macapagal) three years and an election t[illegible] recog[illegible] tha[illegible] a salary increase [illegible] ad I[illegible] due to government [illegible] ployees Gaite said [illegible] view [illegible]

"The probl[illegible] ecte her employees [illegible] respo[illegible] pronouncemen[illegible] sumed pow[illegible] 00 that she woul[illegible] reaucracy. [illegible] did. What respo[illegible] by denying the [illegible] th[illegible] ployees to a living wage[illegible]

Gaite said th[illegible] me that was [illegible] unionists" was [illegible] ant [illegible] ore any huge protest actio[illegible] n Day. Worker[illegible] us[illegible] tional benefi[illegible] or[illegible] during the Labor Day celebration.

The memorandum, which also provided for a revenue measure to cover the cost of the proposed wage increase, was also signed by Chief Presidential Legal Counsel Joe Nathan Tenefrancia and Budget Secretary Emilia Boncodin.

"What Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo did to [illegible] employees warrants absence of support for her. We cannot agree to this kind of governance," he said.

A P3,000 across-the-board salary increase would require P52 billion, which Gaite said the government could raise if it realigned its P400-billion allocation for debt service and military expenditures.

Individual companies

[illegible] Visaya Area Business Conference, Carlos Co, PCCII vice pre[illegible] nt for the Visayas, said wage adjustments should be left to individual companies and their workers. "Adjustments should be [illegible] n productivity rather than [illegible] osts," he said.

[illegible] companies could not afford the wages of their workers because of the sluggish economic per[illegible] rmance in 2002 up to the middle [illegible] last year, said Robert Go, [illegible] dent of the Cebu Chamber of [illegible] mmerce and Industry.

[illegible] wage increase) wrong [illegible] dded Jose Ng, PCCII governor for Central Visayas. He said many firms would close down if there should be a wage increase.

He said major industries in Cebu like the furniture industry were facing tough competition from China and Vietnam. "As much as we understand the problem of labor groups, we hope they would also understand the problem of businessmen," Ng said.

But the KMU said a wage increase of P125 was reasonable and justified.

"It is actually not enough to cope with the increasing cost of basic goods and services. What we ask for is just a small amount to augment our very measly wages," Joel Maglunsod, KMU secretary general, said.

"For the past three years, workers have been suffering severe financial distress due to the absence of significant wage adjustments. Wages have been eroded by as much as P51.80 since 1999 when we first introduced the P125 across-the-board wage hike demand," he said in a statement.

Maglunsod said employers should recognize the "irrefutable need for urgent wage hikes and they should stop threatening workers with massive joblessness when we press for our right to adequate livelihood." *With a report from Delfin T. Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Boy with rare ailment on road to recovery

From page A1

The team was composed of Dr. Adrian Catbagan and Dr. Loreto Fellizar, spine surgeons; Dr. Mike Javier, pediatric pulmonologist; Dr. Susan Padilla Campos, pediatric endocrinologist; Dr. Menchit Padilla, pediatric geneticist; Dr. Cecilia Untalan, pediatric infectious disease specialist; Dr. Edgardo Ortiz, pediatric cardiologist; Dr. Rina Quintos, EENT; Dr. Froilan Inocencio, pediatric ophthalmologist; Dr. Marisa Lukban, pediatric neurologist, and Dr. Sharon Ignacio, rehabilitation medicine specialist.

They were assisted by a big group of nurses, allied health professionals and other health workers.

Kenneth was admitted to the PGH on Valentine's Day, and underwent a six-hour surgery a week later to correct the instability in the C1 (Cervical 1) section of his spine. For the full duration of their ward's hospital stay, Lopez and his team worked in close coordination to ensure a comprehensive approach to Kenneth's condition.

The INQUIRER faithfully documented the boy's healing journey. More support flowed in with every story published. By the time he was operated on on Feb. 21, donations had reached over P600,000.

Now Kenneth needs the ventilator (one has been installed in the Villas' small home in Cainta, Rizal) only at night when he sleeps. He [illegible] in a wheelcha[illegible] still wears a ha[illegible] his head sta[illegible] almost entir[illegible] world. Much [illegible] progress could [illegible] attri[illegible] close bond h[illegible] Doctor Javier [illegible] s pu[illegible]

Javier has [illegible] devotion in [illegible] neth, citing the resilient spirit, [illegible] determination. The [illegible] would spend an ave[illegible] twe[illegible] four hours on the job [illegible] that the boy was prope[illegible] from the ventilat[illegible] Kenneth's full [illegible]

Happy, optimistic

Asked [illegible] wh[illegible] much time i[illegible] deavor, Javier [illegible] baffled himself. He

"I'm friendly [illegible] tients but there [illegible] extraordinary abou[illegible] has been throug[illegible] mu[illegible] young life, and [illegible] terness in him, a[illegible] He [illegible] happy and opti[illegible] He [illegible] very strong faith [illegible] al. When I am with him, I ter[illegible] to f[illegible] own problems. He[illegible] ho[illegible] just takes everythi[illegible]

Kenneth calls [illegible] "Kuy[illegible] In Javier the boy [illegible] found a father fi[illegible] tionship has [illegible]

Javier hopes to get Ken[illegible] ompletely off the ventilator [illegible] next few months.

[illegible] the last two weeks of [illegible] confinement at the PGH, [illegible] unts and Javier would [illegible] on the wheelchair and [illegible] im to the nearby Robinson's Mall. That was how his hours off [illegible] eathing machine improved [illegible] nsel[illegible]

[illegible] by the new sights and [illegible] he experienced, Ken [illegible] lose track of time and [illegible] eminded of the ventilator [illegible]

Three days before his dis[illegible] on a trip to the Museo [illegible] that was arranged by [illegible] Foundation. Kenneth [illegible] ff the machine for a [illegible] hours. His eyes [illegible] he took in the sur[illegible] ing. It was his very first trip outside the hospital.

"I'm determined to get well," he told [illegible] he [illegible] "I will help my K[illegible] Doc in his job."

At [illegible] PGH, Kenneth also re[illegible] surprise visit from [illegible] Secretary Manuel Dayrit, [illegible] heard about the boy's [illegible] from [illegible] groups, and PGH Di[illegible] Carmelo Alfiler. An inter[illegible] idelight is that Lopez, [illegible] and Dayrit were all class[illegible] at the University of the [illegible] ippines College of Medicine.

One afternoon, Dayrit visited [illegible] neth and spent close to a half hour chatting with him and his doctors. For his distinguished visitor, the boy played "When You Wish Upon A Star" and "Somewhere in Time" on his toy organ.

A new life

"Heroic," was how Dayrit described Kenneth and Lopez's medical team. "He's such a heroic boy, considering everything that he has been through. His doctors are heroes, too, and most especially his grandmother and aunts who took him under their wing."

Sitting with patients like Kenneth was the best part of being health secretary, Dayrit said, smiling. "Stories like his make the job much more meaningful."

As a whole new chapter unfolds in the courageous little boy's life, he is thankful for all the doctors and the health care workers who have brought him this far. "*Tinulungan nila ako. Tinulungan sila lahat ni* God (They helped me. God helped them)."

A child's simple faith, the devotion of family, the medical expertise of the country's best, and the unwavering support of many generous hearts that came to Kenneth's rescue have performed the veritable miracle together. The brave little one summed up his current state with the certainty of the truly wise: "*Nag-uumpisa pa lang uli ang buhay ko* (My life is just beginning all over again)."

Opposition . . .

From page A1

Lawyer Melanio "Batas" Mauricio made the appeal after organizers postponed a planned opposition show of force on Labor Day to denounce Ms Macapagal's alleged illegal use of public funds in her campaign.

In lieu of a May Day rally, Mauricio urged people to take part in a day-long prayer and fast.

"This is the only way miracles can happen, according to the Bible," he told the INQUIRER. "Secondly, this is the only way to exorcise the demons of government funds misuse by the Arroyo administration."

"We hope the prayers would hit their target—Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo—and that she would put a stop to this."

Red ribbons

Mauricio, who attended a Mass marking the 55th birthday of Alyansa vice presidential candidate Herminio Aquino, also urged the people to place lighted candles at their windows and doors on May 1 "so that the light of God will shine upon us."

Wearing red ribbons and ties "to signify our fight against fund misuse" may also help, he added.

Jaime Galvez-Tan, political strategist of Alyansa's presidential candidate Raul Roco, said he and the other organizers of the abortive rally had yet to decide when and where to hold it.

He earlier said the group planned to hold the rally on another day before the election.

"There's nothing definite about the rally," he told reporters yesterday. But he stressed there was a "wide variety of players" who had signed up to join them.

Malacañang said the President would appeal to the "good sense" of her political rivals to drop their plan entirely because a rally could unsettle the political situation just days before the elections.

"We would prefer that these types of activities that might disturb the prevailing relatively quiet circumstances do not push through," Ms Macapagal's spokesperson, Ignacio Bunye, said on the phone.

Leave it to courts

The President's campaign spokesperson, Housing Secretary Michael Defensor, said on RMN radio the protest rally was uncalled for, considering the issue of alleged funds misuse should be settled by the courts.

Defensor suggested that the opposition just let the voters themselves decide whether the President had illegally dipped into government funds to promote her election.

Two administration allies in the Senate called on the organizers to forget the planned rally.

Senate President Franklin Drilon said the political situation was "already tense and could worsen with the proposed protest rally."

"They know in their heart of hearts that she (Ms Macapagal) will win the elections," Drilon said.

Majority Leader Francis Pangilinan said the challenge to political leaders "isn't so much about presenting to the voters what one opposes or what one is against ... but conveying to the voters what one stands for and what one hopes to achieve."

Reelectionist administration Sen. Robert Barbers warned the mass action could be used by "some imprudent organizations to pounce on the opportunity to destabilize the government."

Opposition reelectionist Sen. Aquilino Pimentel Jr. said he supported the cause of the rally but it should be held on another day other than Labor Day. *With reports from Gil Cabacungan Jr. and Christine O. Avendaño*

Undecided vote still up for grabs

From page A1

President's lead "is slim." This result is set against the background of a 10.9-percent undecided vote, which swelled by three points following the departure of Raul Roco from his presidential campaign due to illness.

Still, despite the slim margin, the pattern is clear that since the Jan. 16-22 survey, the President has been steadily gaining, and Poe, who had been the front-runner before January, has been sliding downhill. From last December, Ms Macapagal had been struggling as the underdog in the surveys and had fought a remarkable uphill catch-up to overcome her deficit. The April survey reversed the situation. Poe has now to struggle to catch up and regain lost ground.

Questions

In the next three weeks, two questions excite public attention: Can the President sustain her gains and build momentum to pull further ahe[illegible] of Poe Poe, who is no[illegible] "yi[illegible] to [illegible] his breath, give[illegible] paign the [illegible] ately need[illegible]

The [illegible] for Poe [illegible] Poe held [illegible] cent over Ms Ma[illegible] President pollin[illegible] percent to th[illegible] cent. That w[illegible] ap F[illegible] ever held.

From Januar[illegible] to change Po[illegible] lipp[illegible] slope sliding [illegible] cent[illegible] February, to 32 pe[illegible] Mar[illegible] and back to 30 [illegible] pe[illegible] The curve [illegible] downl[illegible] uary, he lost six perc[illegible]

By contrast [illegible] the Pre[illegible] curve has [illegible] Fr[illegible] January whe[illegible] percent Ms Ma[illegible] plotted [illegible] d[illegible] rise S[illegible] February 1[illegible] and [illegible] April. She gained [illegible] perce[illegible] over [illegible] of [illegible] surveys, compared to Poe's six-point loss over the same period.

The picture is that Poe is swimming against a strong current [illegible] at the same time, the Pres[illegible] ding on to give her the [illegible] the campaign. The turn[illegible] came earlier than April, [illegible] surveys in which they [illegible]

Roco's departure

The departure of Roco for med[illegible] treatment not only dislocated [illegible] former education secretary's [illegible] aign but caused a shift that [illegible] the President turn the [illegible] Other than that, other [illegible] damaged Poe's campaign.

[illegible] nger the campaign wore [illegible] Poe's inadequacies showed, notably his refusal to engage [illegible] public debate over policies [illegible] platform and his failure to [illegible] oherent program. [illegible] ost his nerve under [illegible] the campaign, tig[illegible] en with the press [illegible] revealed his thuggish impulses against intense scrutiny of his platform and plans.

Pulse Asia had earlier picked up signs that Ms Macapagal had overtaken Poe. Its March 27 to April 2004 survey showed that the President had gained a three-point lead with 34 percent over Poe's 31 percent.

Although SWS and Poe conducted separate independent surveys, their findings similarly drew a profile of Poe on the decline and Ms Macapagal on the rise.

The ground shifted with Roco's withdrawal. Roco was pushed from third to fourth place in the survey. He lost half (7 percent) of his 15 points in the previous survey. Ms Macapagal gained four percentage points from the votes that Roco lost, although the shift swelled the undecided vote by three percentage points to 10.9 percent.

The undecided

The undecided vote is up for grabs. How it will be distributed can determine whether the President widens her lead or whether Poe can catch up at all.

With the Roco alliance demoralized, further gains of Ms Macapagal in the surveys could put pressure on Roco's still wavering supporters to make up their minds. They are likely to shift toward the President rather than to Poe.

How Lacson's 10.6 percent will go is a question mark and will be determined by the success or failure of unification efforts in the fractured opposition ranks. At this late stage, there is little sign that the opposition can present a united front before it completely loses the window of opportunity to avert a total meltdown in its campaign that has been plagued for nearly six months with disunity and a series of mistakes, part of which can be blamed on Poe himself.

At this point, it has become increasingly clear that neither Poe nor Lacson is serious in having a fusion. Not only have they failed to meet, they don't seem interested in talking at all. Their negotiations have degenerated into a ridiculous quibbling over whether Poe can send text messages by cell phone.

If they can't even arrange a date, convenient for them to meet, it's pointless to consider terms of concord. The more difficult issues pertain to who will make way—Poe or Lacson—to present a single opposition candidate to take on the President.

No less vexatious is the issue of whether Loren Legarda will quit at this advanced stage of her vice presidential candidacy to make way for Lacson, assuming he steps aside for Poe.

Barring a fusion within the week, already too late, and unless a shattering event intervenes that can drastically change the scenario, the odds are stacked up against the opposition reversing the tide. If we speak of a bandwagon, evidence points to it building behind the President.

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METRO

Editor Abelardo S. Ulanday

BARCELONA. No arms and legs, but not without feelings
ERIK ARAZAS

Kabayan's show hit for 'exploitation'

By Margaux Ortiz

THE FAMILY of a boy who was born without arms and legs is accusing vice presidential candidate Noli de Castro of exploiting their son in his TV program aired over the Lopez-owned ABS-CBN.

The boy, Peter John Barcelona, 13, said he was traumatized when a feature done on him by "Magandang Gabi Bayan" (MGB) in 1998 was replayed in February.

Angry

"I'm angry," Barcelona softly told the INQUIRER in Filipino while recalling the scenes that showed him walking, eating and bathing naked, with his genitals exposed.

The video was taken when he was still 6 years old.

ABS-CBN re-aired the segment on Feb. 7 as part of De Castro's final episode on MGB.

The episode was supposed to show handicapped children whom the program claimed to have helped.

But the boy's family said they felt no comfort from the segment.

"The boy already has a birth defect and the show even offended him," Barcelona's mother, Charita, said when they went to the INQUIRER office.

Horrified

Nilo Baculo, Barcelona's uncle, said they were horrified at the way the show hosted by De Castro and aired on ABS-CBN portrayed the boy.

Baculo explained that the family wanted to complain as early as 1998. "But she (Charita) convinced us not to complain because we would be going against very powerful people," Baculo said in Filipino.

But when MGB and ABS CBN replayed the segment two months ago, the Barcelona family was appalled.

The usually lively Barcelona reportedly suddenly fell silent. His body trembled. And tears rolled down his cheeks.

"Who wouldn't react that way? The boy was shown with his genitals in full display," Baculo lamented, noting that Barcelona, as a young teener, was already conscious of himself.

Asked why they let MGB take footages of Barcelona naked, Charita said that they did not know how De Castro would treat the segment.

Embarrassing

The boy, a fourth grade student at the Balite Elementary School in Calapan City, Mindoro Oriental, said most of his younger classmates teased him about the show.

"*Nakakahiya talaga* (I was so embarrassed)," Barcelona said.

Charita and Baculo, who said they had to sell rice to be able to come to Manila, denied that their complaint was election-related.

De Castro's reply

THE SPOKESPERSON of vice presidential candidate Noli de Castro said the latter meant no harm in featuring a boy that had no arms and legs in his show "Magandang Gabi Bayan."

"The purpose of the segment was to show that (Peter John) Barcelona was a special child with a special talent," said Jesse Andres.

"The boy was interviewed in the presence of his parents and MGB had asked for their permission before shooting the footages," Andres said.

He added that De Castro even gave a P5,700 honorarium for the boy. *Margaux Ortiz*

Valenzuela candidates list top 3 problem areas

By Edson Castro Tandoc Jr.

FLOODING. Peace and order. A huge debt.

For the three mayoralty candidates who all claim to be the most experienced for the post, these are the three biggest problems of Valenzuela City which they promise to solve if elected.

In separate interviews, the INQUIRER asked mayoralty bets Rita Carlos, Rep. Sherwin Gatchalian and Rep. Magtanggol Gunigundo Jr. about the specific problems facing the city and what they intend to do to solve these.

The mayoralty derby in the city is expected to be tightly fought. Carlos and her husband are in power, but the same is true with Gatchalian and Gunigundo. As incumbent congressmen, the two have their districts as their bailiwicks.

Carlos said "I am not a politician. This is not an ambition but a sacrifice." Gunigundo said "My performance in Congress speaks for itself." Gatchalian said "I may be the youngest but I am the most experienced."

Carlos, wife of the incumbent mayor, said that flooding remained the biggest problem of the city. She said if elected, she would continue the dike projects started by her husband.

She added that drugs also posed a big problem and she would solve this by continuing the Zero Droga program of her husband and providing job opportunities for the youth.

Gatchalian, an incumbent congressman, said that peace and order, particularly drug addiction, was the biggest problem in the city. To solve this, he said he would improve the capability of the local police by providing it with a bigger budget.

He would also develop the barangay watchmen in the city and educate drug users.

For Gunigundo, also an incumbent congressman, the biggest problem is the huge debt of the city. He said the city government was paying P7 million in interest annually for the city's P275 million debt. To solve this, he said he would establish an efficient tax collection through computerization of all offices involved.

Emergency traffic bays for stalled vehicles eyed

THE METRO Manila Development Authority will create emergency bays in main thoroughfares where stalled vehicles could stay for three hours.

MMDA Chair Bayani Fernando yesterday said the scheme would help prevent traffic jams.

He said motorists experiencing vehicle troubles like flat tires and gas problems could temporarily stay within the e-bay.

"The bay could give them time to fix their vehicles without having to disrupt traffic flow," Fernando said, adding that it usually took motorists six to eight hours to remove their stalled vehicles from the road.

MMDA Deputy Chair Cesar Lacuna said the e-bays would be built along Edsa, Commonwealth Avenue and C-5 beginning next week.

A portion of the center island will be removed to give way to the e-bays, Lacuna said.

But Lacuna warned motorists not to stay in the e-bay for more than three hours or risk being towed by a wrecker. *Margaux Ortiz*

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Monday, April 26, 2004
3rd Week of Easter

1st Reading:	Acts 6:8-15
Gospel:	Jn 6:22-29

Next day the people who had stayed on the other side realized that only one boat had been there and that Jesus had not entered it with his disciples; rather, the disciples had gone away alone. Bigger boats from Tiberias came near the place where all these people had eaten the bread. When they saw that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they got into the boats and went to Capernaum looking for Jesus.

When they found him on the other side of the lake, they asked him, "Master, when did you come here?"

Jesus answered, "Truly, I say to you, you look for me, not because you have seen through the signs, but because you ate bread and were satisfied. Work then, not for perishable food, but for the lasting food which gives eternal life. The Son of Man will give it to you, for he is the one the Father has marked."

Then the Jews asked him, "What shall we do? What are the works that God wants us to do?" And Jesus answered them, "The work God wants is this: that you believe in the One whom God has sent."

Commentary

A sign points away from itself, but people weren't interested in looking beyond, he said. This is a distinctive theme of John's gospel. Miracles, here, are not so much acts of compassion (as in the other gospels) as signs of the glory of Christ. John's gospel was written many years after the others, and his aim was not just to recount the deeds that Jesus did (they were already familiar from the other gospels) but to try further to discern their meaning. When John recounts a miracle by Jesus he follows up with a long discourse to clarify its meaning. The feeding of the five thousand, for example, is followed in today's (and tomorrow's) reading by a discourse on the Bread of Life. The healing of the blind man goes with Jesus' claim to be the Light of the World (ch. 9). The raising of Lazarus goes with his claim to be the resurrection and the life (ch. 11).

The single incident has a meaning for all time. Jesus is forever feeding the hungry, illuminating the path, raising the dead. In the 4th century, St. Gregory of Nyssa wrote, "I believe Bethlehem, Golgotha, the Mount of Olives and the resurrection to be truly in the heart of the one who has found God."

Claretian Publications Inc., 8 Mayumi St., UP Village, Diliman, Quezon City, UP P.O. Box 4, Diliman, 1101 Quezon City; Tel.: 921-3984; Fax: 921-7429; E-mail: cci@claret.org; Websites: http://www.bible.claret.org (Claretian Publications Inc.) & http://missionaries.claret.org (Claretians in the Philippines)

105 PUV drivers and conductors accosted for not wearing uniforms

A TOTAL of 105 public utility drivers and conductors were cited last week for not wearing proper and decent uniforms, a Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) official said yesterday.

According to Deputy Chair Cesar Lacuna, the public utility workers wore improper clothing like sleeveless shirts, sandos and slippers.

"The public utility workers also have a responsibility to their passengers," Lacuna said, stressing that these should wear shirts with collars, pants and closed shoes to earn the riding public's respect.

The official said that the drivers were apprehended following the creation and deployment of a special team composed of MMDA traffic enforcers and Traffic Enforcement Group personnel.

Each week, the special team will go after violators of a particular traffic regulation.

"Last week, the drive was against improperly dressed public utility personnel. This week, violators of the closed-door policy will be apprehended," Lacuna said, as he noted that the closed door policy was to enforce the rule on buses being allowed to load and unload passengers only in special zones.

He added, "This way, motorists will be reminded that each violation is as grave as another."

Lacuna, however, stressed that other traffic personnel would still be conducting operations against violators of other "equally important" traffic rules. *Margaux Ortiz*

Bad 'lechon' downs 17

A ROASTED pig given as a gift was believed to have caused the poisoning of 17 people at a wedding reception in Alabang, the other day.

PO3 Rey Rocillon Quizon said nine guests and eight employees of Max's restaurant at the Ayala Town Center were taken to the hospital due to nausea, vomiting and stomachache.

Restaurant manager Pinky Bautista said the 'lechon' did not come from Max's, saying that it was flown in from Cebu and that they only allowed it served during the reception.

Max's employees became victims after they were given portions of the pig. *Margaux Ortiz*

READY TO SOAR
Young teenage boys prepare to let their home-made kite fly into the skies during Sunday's 14th Bear Brand Kite Festival at the Luneta grounds. Hundreds of kites of different colors and shapes competed in the annual festival.
ERIK ARAZAS

SUPREME COURT DOCTRINES

REMEDIAL LAW (CIVIL PROCEDURE)—In petitions for review on certiorari, only questions of law may be raised by the parties and passed upon by the Supreme Court.—In petitions for review on certiorari, only questions of law may be raised by the parties and passed upon by the Supreme Court. Factual findings of the Court of Appeals are binding and conclusive on the parties and upon this court and will not be reviewed or disturbed on appeal. The rule admits of certain exceptions, such as: (a) when the findings of fact of the appellate court are at variance with those of the trial court; (b) when the Court of Appeals manifestly overlooked certain relevant facts not disputed by the parties which, if properly considered, would justify a different conclusion; and (c) when the judgment itself is based on a misapprehension of facts. As held in the assailed Decision, petitioner failed to prove that the case at bar falls within the exceptions. [Citations omitted.] [Justice Ynares-Santiago, Special First Division, Bank of the Philippine Islands vs Leobrera, G. R. No. 137147, November 18, 2003]

BY R. B. VERA

P10M fire hits biscuit factory

FIRE swept through a biscuit factory in Valenzuela City early yesterday morning, gutting about P10 million worth of property.

The fire broke out at 1:40 a.m. in the Dairy Crunch Biscuit Corp. in Barangay Dalandanan, fire duty officer SFO1 Melchor Gonzales said.

Investigators have yet to determine the cause of the four-hour fire, which reached Task Force Bravo. Nobody was reported injured. *Edson C. Tandoc Jr.*

2 held for stolen railings

TWO MEN were arrested early yesterday morning in connection with the disappearance of steel railings on the Ortigas flyover.

Suspects Leo Randal, 34, and Joey Casile, 15, both jobless and residents of Rosario, Pasig City, were caught in the act of dismantling the railings with a wrench around 3 a.m. yesterday, according to Metropolitan Manila Development Authority Deputy Chair Cesar Lacuna.

Two dismantled railings and eight adaptors were caught in the suspects' possession, Lacuna said.

Lacuna added that Barangay Ugong's chairperson, Arnie Legaspi, in coordination with MMDA personnel chanced upon the suspects while conducting a patrol.

The suspects later confessed selling the stolen railings to Nestor and Julie Narag, owners of a junkshop in Caniogan, Pasig City.

The Narag couple was then arrested and will be charged with violation of the anti-fencing law. *Margaux Ortiz*

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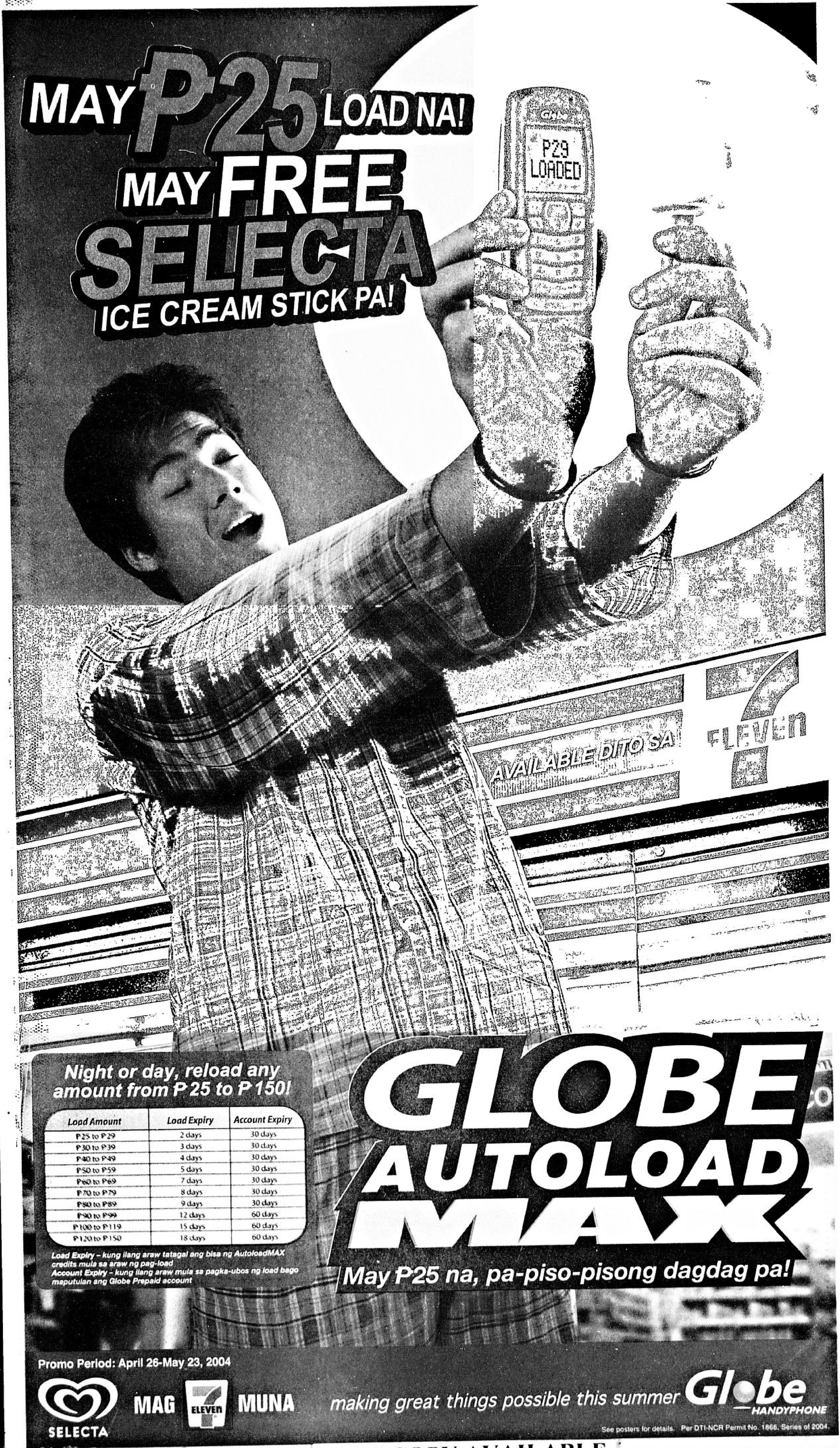

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E-mail:
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Editor **Teddyvic S. Melendres**
Assistant Editor **Edwin M. Villanueva**

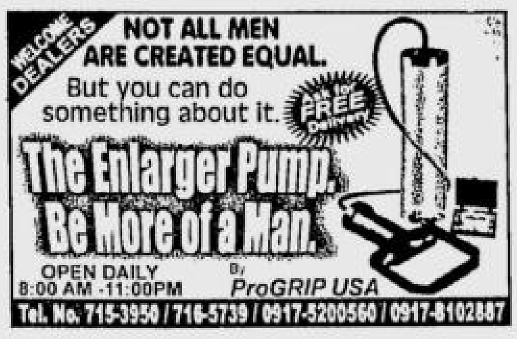
SPORTS TV

Compiled by L. Manguiat

BASKETBALL: 2004 NBA Playoffs - Spurs vs Grizzlies, Game 4, West First Round; 9:30 a.m. (r - 10 p.m.); Solar Sports; Lakers vs Rockets, Game 4, West First Round; 8 p.m.; IBC 13 - San Antonio and Memphis tangle in the pivotal fourth game even as LA and Houston continue their series out in Texas.

WHAT'S INSIDE

■ Santillan recaptures OPBF crown in Japan /A26
■ SMB holds back Realtors /A27
■ Aussie rules AF3 opener /A28
■ Mavs cut Kings lead /A30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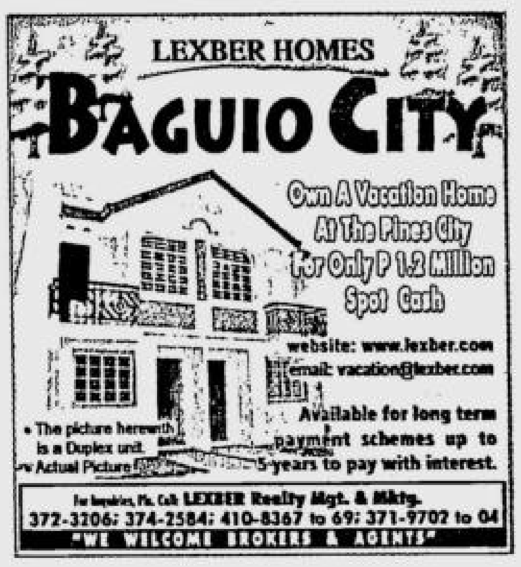
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MARCIAL Robosa of Tanduay Rhum Riders glances at the motorcycle escort as he pedals away in Cagayan Valley during yesterday's 11th Stage. ROMY HOMILLADA

Tour's longest day ahead of overall leader

By Marc Anthony Reyes

APARRI—Can the rider who held the Air21 Tour Pilipinas yellow jersey for the longest time, last in the longest day?

That question far outweighed yesterday's results as overall leader Enrique Domingo's five-day reign comes under fire today in the lung-busting 252-km 12th stage from here to Laoag City.

Dole rookie Michael Ramos triumphed in yesterday's 103-km 11th stage from Tuguegarao City but focus was clearly on how the injured, 35-year-old Domingo can hold on to the lead in the face of an ominous threat from a bunch of young riders led by the second-running Rhyan Tanguilig.

"*Parang rest day lang ngayon, maiksi kasi* (Today's stage is just like a rest day, it's very short)," said Domingo. "*Bukas talaga ang bakbakan dahil maraming kalaban bukod sa kapwa siklista* (Tomorrow's stage will be the real test because of too many factors aside from my rivals)."

Today's longest stage will take the 81 surviving riders through the northernmost tip of Luzon, where they are expected to run into seasonal winds coming from the South China Sea.

"You will also face winding roads, climbs and boredom," said Domingo in Filipino of the stage which he has won in the 1989 Tour. "It (the route) was still rough then."

Now, the overall leader since the 7th stage in Dagupan plans to just hound Tanguilig, the 25-year-old PLDT captain, who trails him by four minutes, 27 seconds.

"I only have one strategy against him, that is to ride behind him all the way," said Domingo. "That's what he's been doing to me since I won the yellow jersey anyway."

Domingo, known for his weakness in climbing mountains, crossed the finish line yesterday four minutes behind Ramos in the company of Tanguilig and Beer na Beer rookie Tomas Martinez.

He said he could have sprinted all the way here but his wounds from Saturday's spill bothered him as they hurt when he perspired. Domingo said he didn't take any medicine for the deep bruises on his right hip, legs and arms even though he didn't sleep well Saturday night because of the pain.

The 18-year-old Ramos, from Llanera, Nueva Ecija, and a veteran of fiesta races in his province, clocked two hours, 15 minutes, 28 seconds in taking the day's lap win.

Postmen assistant skipper Lloyd Reynante, the 10th lap winner, came in 15 seconds later, while Patrol 117's Paterno Curtan placed third, 21 seconds behind Ramos.

Samsung skipper Merculio Ramos finished fifth in the stage and jumped from sixth over-

TOUR'S/ A26

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Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 0695. Series of 2004.

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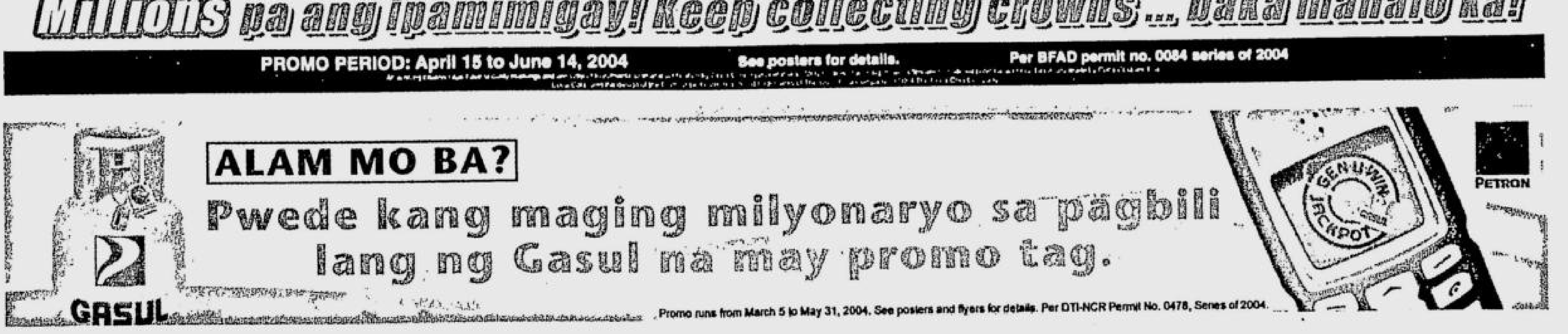
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Promo runs from March 5 to May 31, 2004. See posters and flyers for details. Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 0478, Series of 2004.

Overall standings After Stage 11

1. E. Domingo (Postmen) 44:23:40
2. R. Tanguilig (PLDT) 4:27 mins behind
3. M. Ramos (Dole) 6:26 mins. behind
4. A. Primeo (Dole) 8:55 mins. behind
5. T. Martinez (Beer na Beer) 9:01 mins. behind
6. E. Feliciano (Patrol 117) 9.22 mins. behind
7. J. Calderon (Beer na Beer) 10:01 mins. behind
8. B. Ravina (VAT Riders) 10.58 mins. behind
9. J. Millanes (Postmen) 12 mins. behind
10. O. Quinones (Purefoods) 12:23 mins. behind

AIR 21
STUDIO 23
DZMM RADYO PATROL SAIS TRENTA
FedEx Mail and More Tanduay Beer na Beer PLDT SAMSUNG PUREFOODS Dole Marsman Drysdale Medical Products, Inc. METRO DRUG, INC PATROL 117 DILG VAT RIDERS DOTC
2004 TOUR AIR 21

Santillan recaptures OPBF crown in Japan

By Salven L. Lagumbay

FILIPINO Rev "Gentle Giant" Santillan regained the Oriental and Pacific Boxing Federation welterweight crown last night, prevailing by split decision over Hiroshi Watanabe in their 12-round showdown at the Park Arena in Nagoya, Japan.

The southpaw Santillan (20-1-1, 15 KOs) battered Watanabe for most of the fight with head and body shots en route to winning on two of the three judges' scorecards.

Australian referee-judge Brad Vocale and Filipino judge Alex Vidal favored the Iloilo-born Santillan, while the third judge—a Japanese—scored it for Watanabe.

It was sweet redemption for the Cebuano Santillan, who lost the same OPBF belt to Watanabe on Oct. 14, 2002 via a highly disputed split decision win.

Santillan earned the grudge rematch by racking up four wins to keep himself on top of the OPBF rankings.

This time, OPBF president Frank Quill made sure the judging will not be stacked against Santillan, appointing a neutral official in Vocale, who hails from Australia.

Santillan's trainer Brix Flores, in a long-distance call, said Santillan did enough damage in the fight to warrant a win.

"Santillan clearly dominated the fight this time. We are so happy for this win," Flores said.

Santillan was cheered on by manager Rex "Wakee" Salud and wife Elvie, and a group of Filipino seamen from Yokohama led by Torribio Manaay who came for their local idol.

Tanong ng Bayan
INQ TV
Ngayong Alas-10 Ng Gabi
Campaign funds: Donasyon na may kundisyon?
Pera ang nagpapaikot ng kampanya, pero meron bang donasyon na walang kundisyon? Ang sagot nina Ermin Garcia (Ping), Jaime Galvez Tan (Roco), Donald Dee (GMA), Rez Cortez and Nino Muhlach (FPJ), at analyst Mon Casiple, political strategist Reli German, election lawyer Romy Makalintal. Ngayong alas-10 ng gabi, sa ABC. (May replay bukas, alas-8 ng umaga.)
ABC

Tour's longest day . . .

From page A25

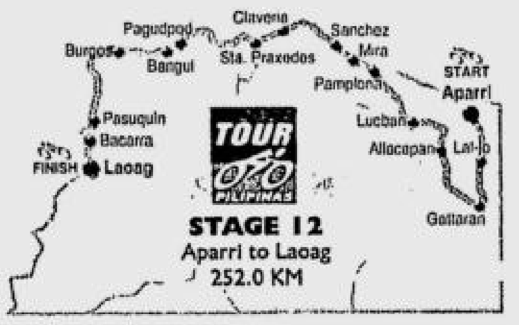
all to third, just 6:26 behind Domingo.

Also within striking distance from Domingo are Dole captain Albert Primero (8:55), Martinez (9:01) and former three-day overall leader Frederick Feliciano (9:22).

The Postmen, powered by Domingo, Reynante and Joseph Millanes, firmed up their lead in the team race, where P1 million awaits the winner.

They enjoyed a 21-minute, 56-second lead over Beer na Beer, which in turn had a two-minute advantage over Dole.

The Tour is sponsored by Pharex Vitamins, Red Bull, Summit Water, Gatorade, Lactovitale, Elixir Bikeshop and Isuzu.



STAGE 12
Aparri to Laoag
252.0 KM

STAGE 11 RESULTS

INDIVIDUAL

1. M. Ramos (Dole) 2 hrs 15 mins 28 secs

2. L. Reynante (Postmen) 15 secs behind

3. P. Curtan (Patrol 117) 21 secs; 4. M. Mendoza (Metro Drug) 5. M. Ramos (Samsung) 6. A. Quirimit (Tanduay Rhum Riders) 7. A. Benedicto (Beer Na Beer) 8. D. Tacutacu (Purefoods) 9. R. Galdonez (Mail and More) 10. V. Virgilio (Marsman Drysdale) 11. L. Lingas (Postmen) 12. J. Guillen (Samsung) 13. C. Felix (Vat Riders) 14. B. Ravina (Vat Riders) 15. J. Ricafort (Purefoods) 16. E. Feliciano (Patrol 117) 17. J. Garillo (Mail and More) 18. G. Bergonio (Samsung) same time

19. A. Primero (Dole) 3:38 mins; 20. E. Quinones (Purefoods) 21. D. Valdez (Patrol 117) 22. W. Calosa (Tanduay Rhum Riders) 23. D. Ganigan (Vat Riders) 24. A. Benosa (Metro Drug) same time

25. B. Lopez Jr. (PLDT) 4 mins; 26 P. Manapul (Marsman Drysdale) 27. O. Rendole (Patrol 117) 28. V. Quintia Jr. (Metro Drug) 29. E. Domingo (Postmen) 30. T. Martinez (Beer Na Beer) and 48 others, same time

STAGE 11 OVERALL INDIVIDUAL

10. E. Quinones (Purefoods) 12:23 mins
11. R. Dolosa (Metro Drug) 13:16 mins
12. R. Gorantes (Metro Drug) 15:26
13. S. Bamachea (Mail and More) 15:43
14. R. Navarro (Tanduay Riders) 18:18
15. V. Baluyot (Samsung) 18:24
16. C. Felix (Vat Riders) 19:03
17. D. Ganigan (Vat Riders) 19:55
18. O. Fronda (Mail and More) 19:59
19. E. Obosa (Samsung) 21:20
20. A. Marcelo (Mail and More) 24:25
21. L. Reynante (Postmen) 24:39
22. J. Guillen (Samsung) 25:00
23. S. Benito (Purefoods) 25:14
24. L. Atilano (Mail and More) 25:53
25. O. Villanueva (Dole) 26:14
26. C. Jazul (Beer Na Beer) 26:28
27. W. Davadilla (Purefoods) 29:06
28. V. Espiritu (Beer Na Beer) 31:06
29. J. Dasalla (PLDT) 38:23
30. B. Llentada (Tanduay Riders) 43:46
31. A. Quirimit (Tanduay Rhum Riders)

OVERALL TEAM STANDINGS

1. Postmen 133:02:36.851 hrs
2. Beer Na Beer 21:56.161 mins behind
3. Dole 23:56.214 mins
4. Purefoods 31:57.151 mins
5. Samsung 32:15.386 mins
6. Mail and More 38:29.550 mins
7. Metro Drug 42:08.631 mins
8. Vat Riders 47:11.763 mins
9. Tanduay Rhum Riders 57:53.690 mins
10. Patrol 117 1:13:14.680 hrs
11. PLDT 1:13:56.669 behind
12. Marsman Drysdale 1:18:07.556 hrs

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Pacquiao hits FPJ where it hurts most

BARE EYE

Recab Trinidad

IT WILL be light, somewhat in the super laff-in mode, the knockout shot that will be delivered by Manny Pacquiao for President Macapagal-Arroyo in the homestretch to the May 10 polls.

No, Pacquiao, who will be in the vicinity of the Las Vegas championship site by then, will not be entering the ring for GMA.

But, merry as the blow promises to be, it's expected to deliver a key message.

The KO line, obviously directed at candidate Fernando Poe Jr., will be carried in a television commercial, produced by the same clear thinkers who delivered the neat "last best hope" campaign plug for GMA.

Pacquiao will be speaking in his dialect and, from what we've heard, there would be subtitles.

***

Mr. Poe definitely will not like the GMA election ad, the last in a series.

Why? Because the Pacquiao verbal shot has been perfected to land where it would hurt FPJ most: on the coconut shell.

The clearest tip we've received in this intriguing commercial is the word *basiyo* or *basyo*, which means empty, or hare-brained, in the street lingo.

An empty coconut shell, rather a handsome head devoid of experience and know-how to run the country, has been a recurring theme in the President's anti-FPJ tirades.

Yes, GMA has repeatedly pounded on that FPJ handicap. She has thrown mean digs and blows to send the message that the *masa* itself would be at a great handicap in its endless toils if it chose someone with no basic knowledge of politics and sensible governance.

***

There's no debating that GMA has picked on a most sensitive spot to tickle and tinker with.

Feeds from the FPJ camp say that, if there's one dig that readily hurts and untangles Da King, it's the one about an empty handsome head.

In a nutshell, the pro-GMA commercial insists that the secret "is in the head, not in the heart, brod."

But, hard as the knock on the coconut shell has been, they still had to resort to a truly destructive vehicle to propel it.

And who could best deliver a knockout blow hereabouts than Manny Pacquiao?

***

It's said there has been test runs of the pro-GMA knockout ad in some areas in the Visayas and Mindanao.

It should be airing in Manila next week at the latest, and we could hardly wait because the Pacquiao left hook for GMA is said to be a real knockout.

No need to ask now whether or not Pacquiao has been paid for his services or not.

Truth is Pacquiao has always been a captive, he has been embraced as part of Team GMA way, way ahead of the presidential campaign period.

Pacquiao never bats an eyelash in pledging wholehearted support for the President who has also been very generous to the world boxing celebrity.

When Pacquiao guested recently at the INQUIRER, he swore he's a great fan of FPJ but he would be supporting GMA all the way.

Why? Because, Pacquiao swore, FPJ would just be ran and dominated by the sneering political monsters around him.

***

Now, with his open endorsement of the President, the question is being asked: Will Pacquiao's big, big fight against Juan Manuel Marquez in Las Vegas on the eve of the presidential polls here at home, have a bearing on GMA's candidacy?

As it would be past the campaign period deadline, the intriguing commercial will not be run during the Pacquiao-Marquez fight.

But listen. A Pacquiao win, predicted to come the hard way (if ever), should help deliver a clearer message about the supposed advantage the *masa* could have in voting for GMA.

Together with GMA, the poor and hungry would be rooting and praying for a Pacquiao victory.

But you can also bet that the *masa*, as it continues to sink in the mud and slur of poverty, will not jump into the GMA bandwagon just because Pacquiao had vanquished his Mexican foe.

Feeling hopelessly kayoed under the GMA regime, the *masa* waits for somebody with a heart to pick it up from the floor.

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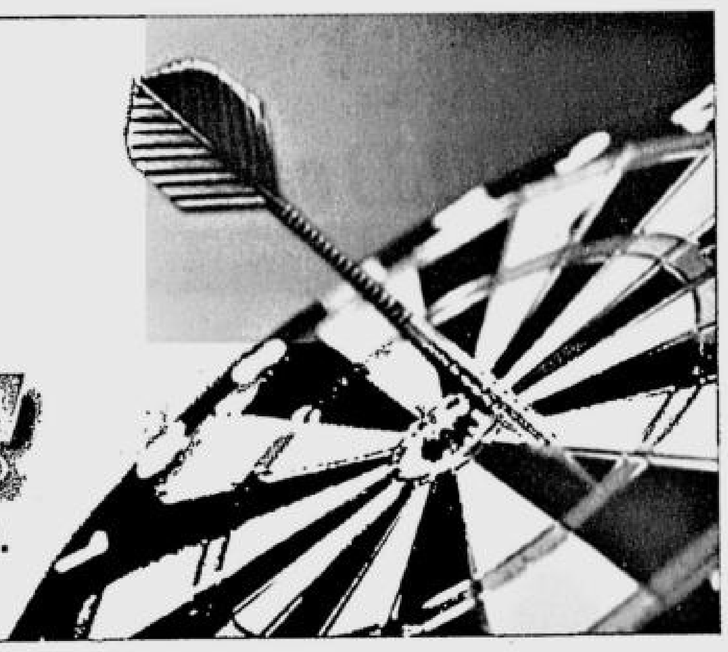
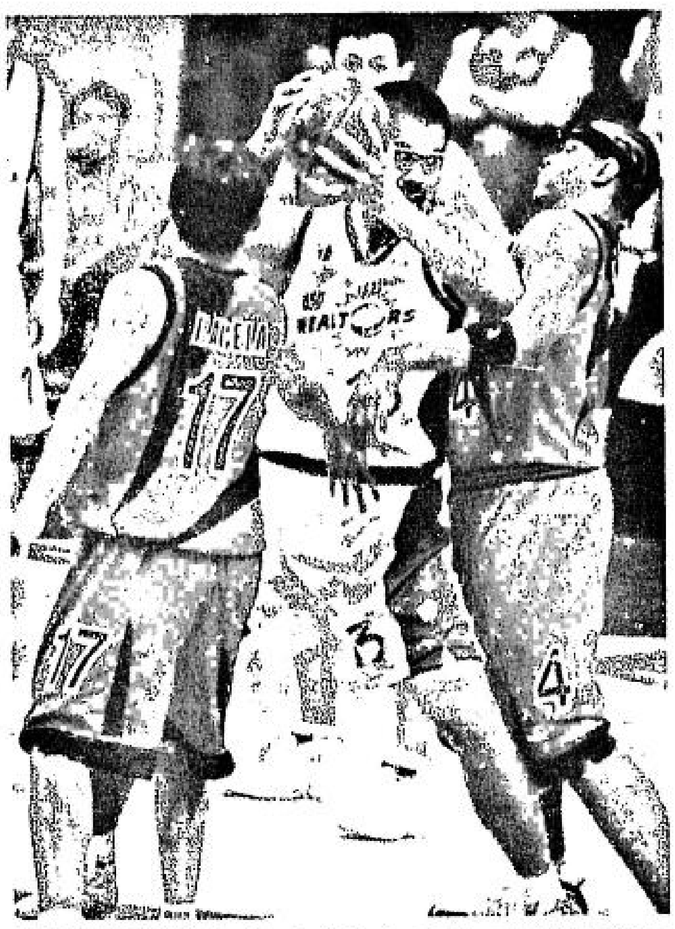


SMB holds back Realtors



STA. LUCIA'S Marlou Aquino tries to wiggle out of the defense put up by Dorian Peña and Olcen Racela of SMB. ROGER MARGALLO.

GAMES WEDNESDAY (*PhilSports Arena*)
4:45 p.m.—Barangay Ginebra vs FedEx
7:10 p.m.—Talk 'N Text vs Alaska

By **Musong Castillo,** *Contributor*

THE TEAM that has grown tired of losing just got it flush on the chin.

San Miguel Beer, a squad that never seems to tire of winning, remained on its lofty perch, as Sta. Lucia came down with a loud thud yesterday after taking a 120-99 beating from the Beermen in the eliminations of the PBA Gran Matador Fiesta Conference.

Just four nights after winning for the third straight time, the Realtors were stopped dead in their tracks as the Beermen broke the game wide open in the second period to improve to 11-1.

Coca-Cola slapped a fifth consecutive defeat on sister team Purefoods after Mark Sanford scored 17 points and grabbed 13 rebounds in an 82-76 decision later in the night.

The Tigers climbed to 8-4, while the Tender Juicy Hotdogs slipped to 3-9.

The worst loss in franchise history for the Realtors, a 52-86 whipping also from San Miguel Beer on April 14, 2000, was in danger of being eclipsed as the Beermen led by 35 early in the fourth before cruising to settle for the 21-point win.

The setback, Sta. Lucia's eighth in 12 games, came after coach Alfrancis Chua had boldly said on Wednesday night that his team "has grown tired of losing."

San Miguel opened up with an 18-8 run to pad a 36-30 first-quarter lead to 54-36 with still 5:19 left before halftime.

The Beermen turned up the heat some more in the third as a 20-8 run in the first six minutes of the period shoved San Miguel inexorably ahead, 86-56. The 35-point bubble came at the 11:20 mark in the fourth after an Art Long basket made it 101-66.

The loss also spoiled a career night for import Derrick Brown, who tossed in 57 points.

The scores:

First Game

SAN MIGUEL 120—Long 28, Ildefonso 18, Hontiveros 15, Peña 14, Belasco 13, Gahol 9, Singson 7, Racela 6, Mente 5, Gamboa 3, Malabanan 2.

STA. LUCIA 99—Brown 57, Aquino 10, Francisco 10, Espino 6, Mendoza 6, Adriano 4, Cuan 2, Ong 2, Duremdes 2, Omolon 0, Gonzales 0, Tan 0.

Quarters: 36-30; 66-48; 97-66; 120-99.

Second Game

COCA-COLA 82—Sanford 18, Reavis 16, Cariaso 16, Hugnatan 8, Juinio 8, Wainwright 5, Morano 5, Hawkins 3, Lao 2, Abarrientos 2, David 0, Avenido 0.

PUREFOODS 76—Elisma 37, Evangelista 12, Johnson 9, Raymundo 8, Yee 4, Castillo 4, Patrimonio 2, Yap 0, Simon 0, Demape 0.

Quarters: 24-18; 42-36; 53-60; 82-76.

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No way but up for Tam, RP Youth

AT A GLANCE, the RP-Burlington Youth Team's victorious sweep in the recent Southeast Asia Junior Basketball Championship seemed easy. The Fillipinos were clearly a cut above.

But don't be misled into thinking that the opposition was weak. It was actually a hard-earned triumph for coach Johnny Tam's wards, preparations-wise.

After the dismal fourth place finish of the team, also handled by Tam, in the 2002 Kuala Lumpur tournament, supporters as well as the Basketball Association of the Philippines made sure that it won't happen again.

Backed by Burlington general manager Rudy Tan and president Pete Tan, a Tuklas Taas program aimed at discovering talents who are at least six feet was held. The three-month project visited 15 cities and produced the likes of Sienna College's Dilan Ababu and PCCr's Alvin Calatayod, both of whom made it to the final roster.

Learning from the experience in 2002, when some schools prohibited their players from joining the KL tournament at the last minute, the people behind the team made sure that everything would be in order for the tournament held in Lucena City.

They charted an eight-month training program and then convinced elite schools, especially NCAA and national secondary titlist San Beda College, to lend their players to the national pool.

Tam then embarked on an exhausting training regimen for the 25-man national pool.

RP-Burlington also held a series of exhibition games, and a group-bonding seminar for the team in Baguio City, a week before the tournament started.

To be sure, the preparations encountered minor glitches.

Allowances were handed out late, players got injured and some coaches wouldn't cooperate.

But fate intervened. After a visit to Angel's House, a regular recipient of Burlington's donations to needy children, the players became more focused.

The effort paid off. The crown was well worth the wait.

Meanwhile, the Seaba Junior Men's Championship will be replayed over Prime Channel on cable TV from 7-9 a.m. starting today, according to Teddy Pareña of Teamsports. *Roy Luarca*

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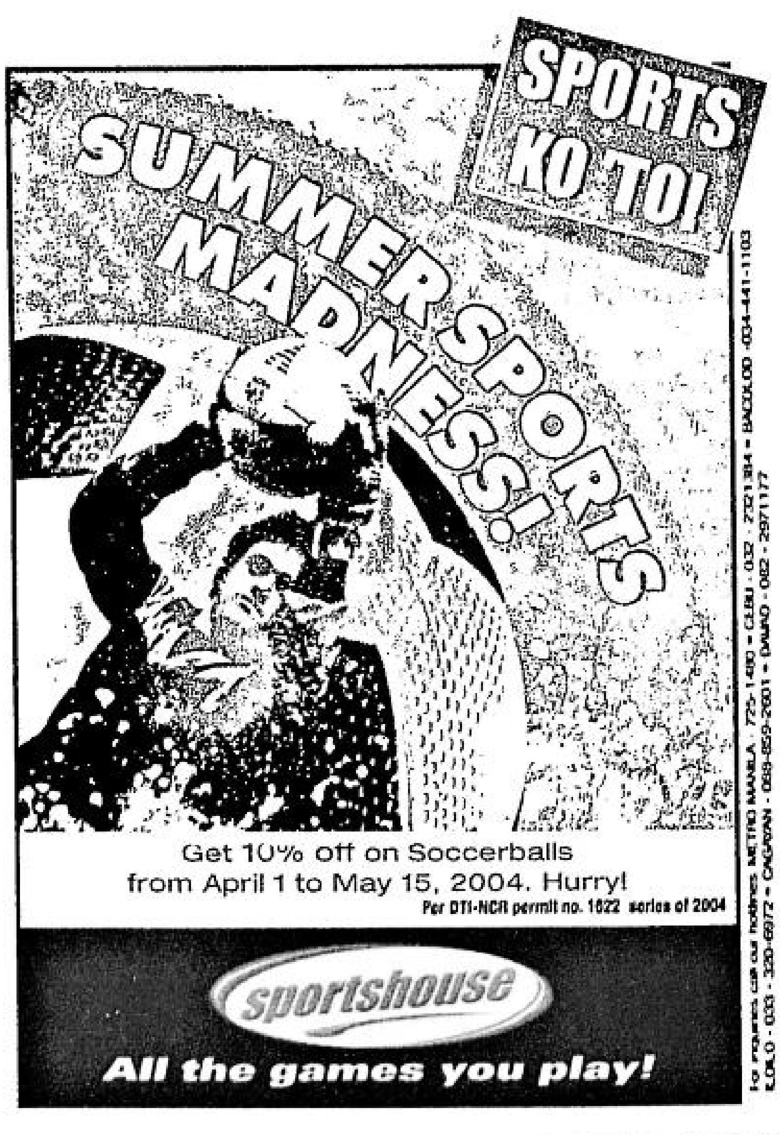

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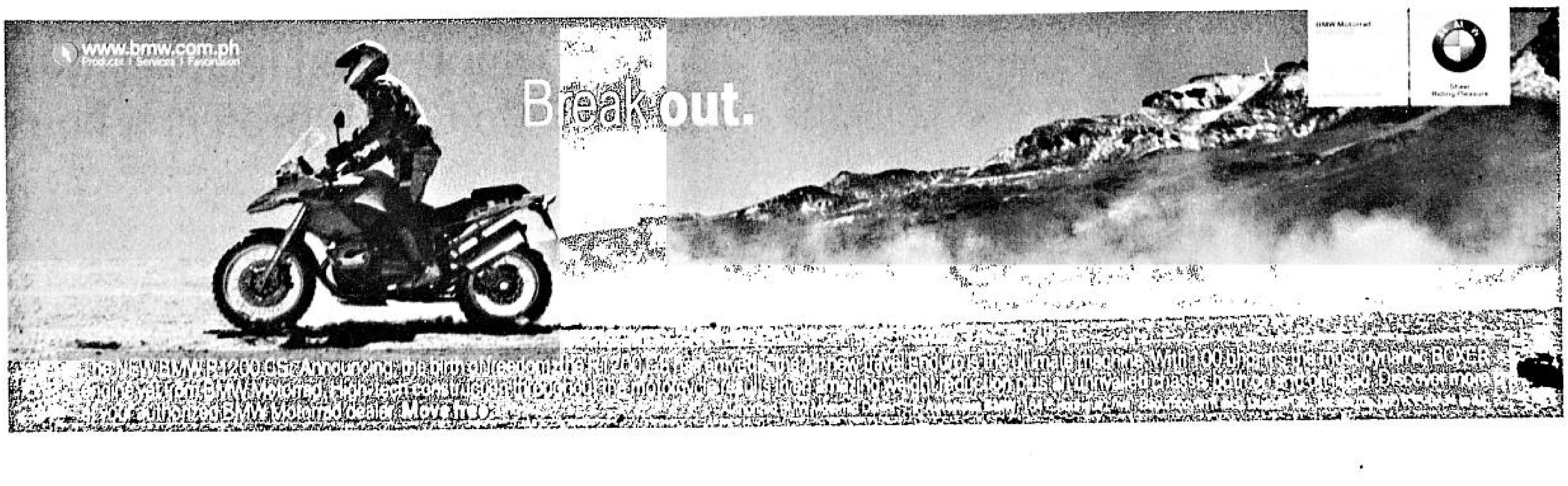

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Aussie rules AF3 opener

Filipino teen racer impresses

VICTORY DOUBLE: Jones (middle) with runner-up O'Hara (left) and third-placer Goddard on the podium.

ROSARIO, BATANGAS—The limelight just couldn't be taken off the kid.

Christian Jones of Australia, racing almost trouble-free, bagged the twin races in the international class yesterday of the season-opening Addict Mobile Asian Formula 3 (AF3) Super Prix here at the Batangas Racing Circuit.

But it was Tyson Sy's double victory in the promotions division—or the class of chassis built before 1998—that left both local and foreign rivals stunned.

The 16-year-old Sy actually even had a chance to barge in the top three overall in the first race but a critical spin-out on the last turn of the fourth lap pushed him back from a comfortable spot at third to fifth place.

The Filipino wunderkind of Castrol Team Goddard-Minardi Team Asia clocked 22 minutes and 20.3 seconds for fifth overall. Sy's fastest lap, which he accomplished in the fourth with a time of one minute and 26.49 seconds, was a three-day best for the Brent School ninth-grader.

He finished sixth overall in the afternoon race but still emerged No.1 on the podium in the same division, galvanizing his status as the future of local racing.

"When I was behind him I thought I was teaching him too well," joked Minardi teammate Mark Goddard of Britain, who tailed Sy in the early goings of Race One before the teenager's error in the fourth lap.

"*Medyo pagod na rin ako. Hindi ako nakapagpakondisyon kaya pagpasok pa lang ng* fourth *hirap na ako* (I got tired. I did not prepare well so I was already struggling going into the fourth lap," said Sy, who is seeing action on the AF3 circuit for the first time in his promising career.

Occupying second spot on the grid in the noontime contest, the ,24-year-old Jones took advantage of an early miscue by Irish driver John O'Hara and never looked back, clocking 21 minutes and 52.76 seconds for 12 laps and garnering 20 points for the victory.

He also won the second race in the afternoon with a time of 17 minutes and 27.66 seconds for an aggregate 40 points going to the second leg of the AF3 in Subic Bay on May 29.

The resurgent O'Hara, representing Shell Kinetic F3, collected 30 points—15 in each race—after finishing second twice behind Jones, who also captured the last round of the AF3 series here last year.

Goddard finished third back-to-back for 24 points.

"This is a better win for me definitely because of guys like John who just make this type of competition a lot stiffer," said the lead driver for Christian Jones Motorsport.

Jojo Silverio of Speedtech Asia topped all Filipinos as he emerged fourth in both races.

The AF3 series opener is supported by Addict Mobile, Yokohama, Denso, Samsung, PLDT MyDSL, Standard Insurance Co. Inc., Department of Tourism, Philippine Convention and Visitors Corp.

It is also backed by Manila Bulletin, NU Rock 107.5 and dzSR Sports Radio.

Samsung Tour kicks off at Southwoods May 4

THE CHAMPIONSHIP division has been stretched to a full 72-hole event, ensuring tougher competition among low handicappers and scratch players when the third season of the Samsung Amateur Tour opens on May 4 at the Legends course of the Manila Southwoods Golf and Country Club in Carmona, Cavite.

The decision to transform what used to be a 54-hole duel into a four-day shootout was approved by Samsung Philippines head Sang Youl Eom in response to the clamor from crack amateurs and junior players in training pools of various exclusive clubs for more exposure.

Incidentally, Southwoods' impressive young Turks are expected to show up in full force. They will go up against rivals from Canlubang led by defending champion Juvic Pagunsan, who is expected back from his stint in the Michael Bonnalack Trophy in Italy.

The first two legs of the Tour will be a blast, according to Boy Blue Ocampo of the organizing Professional Sports Management Group, since it will be hosted by two of the country's most exclusive clubs and played over courses that have won international recognition.

After Southwoods, the series goes to Sta. Elena for the second leg on June 1-4, marking the first time that both courses will open their exclusive doors to the popular course-hopping series.

"The mere mention of these two clubs remind us of excellence and we're really grateful for their kind accommodation," said Ocampo. "We're bracing for a deluge of entries because of the sheer popularity of the two well-maintained courses."

The Samsung Tour format uses gross play in four handicap divisions (championship, Class A, Class B and Class C) in men's play and two brackets (Class A and B) in the ladies' side. This way, players can gauge if they are playing in the right level or not.

Metro Manila golfers and those in the provinces will have five legs to gun for slots to the finals, which will be held on Jan. 21-24 next year.

From Sta. Elena, the Tour heads to Cagayan de Oro for the third leg on July 1-4. Apo is next on Aug. 19-22, Mt. Malarayat plays host to the fifth stop on Oct. 19-22, John Hay takes its turn on Nov. 16-19 and Cebu Country Club stages the final qualifier on Dec. 14-17.

For inquiries on the Samsung Tour, call the PSMG office at 635-0010 or 631-5768.

Suico eyes duel with Morales

By Salven L. Lagumbay, *Contributor*

CAN unbeaten Oriental and Pacific Boxing Federation super-featherweight king Randy Suico go all the way to edge out Manny Pacquiao in the race to fight world super featherweight king Erik Morales of Mexico?

The 24-year-old Suico is slated to leave for Japan on April 25 for the final phase of preparations for his WBC-sanctioned 12-round eliminator against South African Mzonke Fana.

The fight is slated May 28 in Johannesburg.

Suico, ranked WBC No. 2 junior lightweight, remains undefeated in 21 fights with 18 KO's, while Fana, the WBC No. 1 contender, boasts of a fearsome 21-2 win-loss record with 8 KO's.

If Suico wins, he would earn the right to challenge Morales as stipulated in WBC rules.

However, Morales himself had made it clear he wanted to take on Pacquiao either in October or November if the RP ring idol could vanquish tough Juan Manuel Marquez, the IBF/WBC featherweight champ, in Las Vegas on May 8.

Pacquiao himself had lined up Morales as his desired opponent after the Marquez assignment.

In his last outing, Suico defended his OPBF belt with a cold-blooded second-round KO of Korean challenger Seungwon Back last Jan. 30 at the Waterfront Cebu City Hotel.

Two weeks later, Fana answered with a sixth-round TKO win over Christian Paz.

Unranked bet gains JVC last 8

UNRANKED Fatima Cruz stunned eighth seed Ma. Chona Medina to crash into the quarterfinal round of the girls' singles event of the JVC Open Badminton 14-under Championships at SM Pampanga yesterday.

Cruz, a member of the Philippine Badminton Association developmental pool, bundled out Medina, 11-0, 9-11, 11-4, to join the big guns in the next round of the event sponsored by JVC.

Top seed Janina Paredes of Valle Verde led the siege of the fancied bets by blanking Danica Bolos, 11-0, 11-0, the same score posted by another Valle Verde bet, No. 3 Liza Encarnacion, in demolishing Clarisse Arellano.

In other matches, No. 2 Karyn Velez whipped Reyne Calimlim, 11-2, 11-4; fourth seed Mia Villarin thumped Kathleen Balatbat, 11-3, 11-1; No. 5 Jackilyn Cudia beat Monica Yupangco, 11-5, 11-6; No. 6 Carla Lizardo beat Valle Verde's Mariana Bantug, 11-1, 11-2, and No. 7 Bianca Legaspi advanced by walkover over Abigail Garcia.

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Feliciano backs Tommy's PGDF; NGAP polls today

THE NATIONAL Golf Association of the Philippines (NGAP) has expressed unqualified support for a nationwide golf development program being espoused by Tommy Manotoc of Calatagan.

The statement of support came on the eve of the NGAP election set for today at the Philippine Navy Golf Clubhouse.

In a statement, Rod V. Feliciano, NGAP president, said Manotoc's program is "the stuff of golf projects that we should all support."

Feliciano is among 14 candidates vying for a director's seat in the 13-man NGAP. The winning 13 directors will next vote among themselves today who will serve as president for the next two years.

Manotoc, who quit the electoral exercise some days back, had announced last week the formation of the Philippine Golf Development Foundation in the company of Luigi Yulo of Canlubang, OV Espiritu of Manila Golf Club, Alex Montelibano of Bacolod and Vicente "Enteng" Santos of Sta. Lucia Realty, among others.

In his statement to the media, Manotoc said the Foundation seeks "not to fight the NGAP but instead to assist the NGAP."

"All golf-loving Filipinos in this country should extend a helping hand to the group of Mr. Manotoc to ensure the success of the foundation," said Feliciano.

QC Intervillage golf today

THE GOLFING villages in Quezon City take their turn to showcase their shotmaking skills in the first round today of the north sector tournament of the Nokia Intervillage golf series at The Orchard's Palmer Course.

Skippered by Jun Fontanilla, Philam Homes opens its title-retention bid in the annual 36-hole tournament.

The main threat to Philam comes from former champion White Plains, which underwent a tremendous buildup during the off-season and whose bid this year will be led by Rene Sawit and Mariano Imperial.

Also in the fold are Corinthian Gardens of team captain Jun Enriquez, Acropolis of skipper Jake Tan, and La Vista, which will be bannered by Tony Aranda.

Completing the roster of teams in the event, sponsored for the third year by Nokia, are Filinvest, Xavierville and Don Enrique Heights.

The field plays a total of 36 holes in two different courses in a 12-to-play, 8-to-count format using the Stableford scoring system.

The top three teams will advance to the grand finals, another 36-hole event, with the top finisher winning the overall crown.

Tahanan ruled the first round of the south sector tournament at The Riviera with Alabang Hills and Alabang 400 finishing second and third, respectively.

World sports and leisure show gives 'Go GMA!' project a boost

THE "GO for Gold Medal in Athens!" (Go GMA!) Project of the Philippine Sports Commission (PSC) gets a big boost when the First World Sports and Leisure Show opens at 10 a.m. today at the World Trade Center in Pasay City.

Part of the proceeds from the event, organized by Worldbex Services International, will go to the Go GMA! Project aimed at providing support to Filipino athletes who have qualified or are seeking berths in the Olympics.

PSC chair Eric Buhain will lead the formal opening of the show, which will run until April 28 and feature booths of various sports products, equipment, accessories, vehicles, services, publications, and health and fitness centers.

Sports and leisure activities such as badminton, wushu, karatedo, gymnastics, sports aerobics, dancesport, synchronized swimming, artistic pencak silat, skate boarding and power lifting demonstration contests, as well as MILO Best basketball and Checkmate chess clinics will be held simultaneously with the exhibit.

Also endorsed by the Department of Tourism, the event is backed by Colt Ice, Absolute, Titania, Philskate, Ultra, Manila Times, Spurway Enterprises, Burlington, Cantada Sports Center, Bikeroom, Binondo Media Publications, AeroMed, Top 40, Powerbooks and National Bookstore.

Asian Ladies golf at J. Hay

PREPARATIONS are in full blast for the 2nd Asian Ladies Team Championship set on May 24-26 at the 5,001-yard Camp John Hay Golf Club.

The annual all-women invitational is expected to be as competitive as last year's meet, with 30 teams consisting of six players and two alternates each vying in the tournament to be played at the par-69 course redesigned by the Golden Bear International of the legendary Jack Nicklaus.

"More than 100 amateur women representing various golf clubs and associations from all over the Philippines will be competing, so it will be exciting to see how they do," Shean Bedi, overall coordinator of the tournament said.

This year's tournament will be presented by Bayo together with major sponsors, Globe Platinum and CJH Development Corp.

Deadline for the submission of entries has been extended to April 30.

For inquiries, call Bedi at 0918-911-6038 or the tournament office at (074) 444-2133. Entry forms may be faxed to (074)444-2132 or (074) 446-5175.

KGB plays Langer course

MEMBERS of the Kapisanan ng mga Golfers sa Brodkast (KGB) will get to sample the challenge of the Philippine Open's recent venue when they play the Langer course of the Riviera Golf and Country Club in Silang, Cavite tomorrow.

The 18-hole medal play tournament will determine KGB's overall monthly champion as well as the winners in Class A, B, C, the Ladies and Guest divisions. The event is supported by Triple V Inc. and Innove Communications.

The awards luncheon, highlighted by a raffle, will be held at the old Riviera clubhouse.

Registration starts at 6:30 a.m. with the first flight teeing off at 7 a.m.

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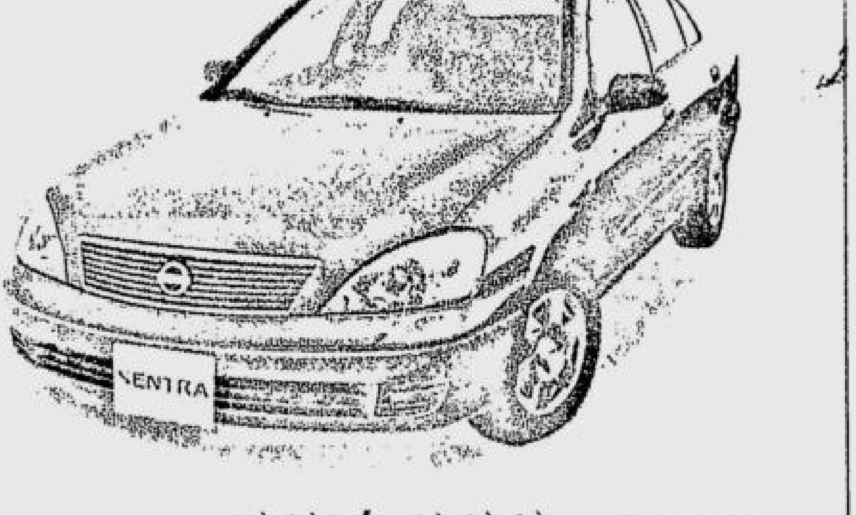

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Mavs cut Kings lead; Pistons up

DALLAS, Texas—The Dallas Mavericks, who boasted the best home record in the National Basketball Association this season, made the most of a return to Dallas Saturday as they narrowed the gap in their first-round playoff series against Sacramento. .

"We felt like we let two games slip away in Sacramento and we wanted to come in and defend our home court," Antawn Jamison said after Dallas defeated the Kings, 104-79, to close the gap in the best-of-seven Western Conference series to 2-1.

Denver and New Orleans also took advantage of their first home games of their series to post their first victories in the playoffs.

Denver routed Minnesota, 107-86, in their Western Conference series, while the Hornets beat Miami, 77-71, in an Eastern Conference confrontation.

In Saturday's other Eastern Conference clash, Detroit downed host Milwaukee, 95-85, to take a 2-1 lead in their series, regaining the home court advantage they surrendered with a defeat in Detroit on Wednesday.

Rookie shines

In Dallas, rookie Marquis Daniels scored 11 of his 22 points in the decisive third quarter, picking up the slack for a banged-up Michael Finley.

Daniels has scored 51 points on 21-of-50 shooting while grabbing 19 rebounds in his first three playoff games.

"I think an awful lot of him," Dallas coach Don Nelson said. "He took what was there and really settled down in the second half. We did more things through him tonight. He responded with an excellent game."

The Mavericks never trailed but put away the game in the third quarter, when they scored 34 points on 12-of-23 shooting. Daniels made 5-of-6 shots in the period as the Mavericks turned a seven-point halftime edge into an 83-59 cushion.

Sacramento made just 4-of-16 shots in the third quarter, including 1-of-8 3-pointers. The Kings scored just 27 points in the second half and trailed by as many as 29.

Dirk Nowitzki had 21 points and Jamison, who left game two with tight hamstrings, scored 20 for Dallas.

Finley scored 18 points, despite the nagging injuries, but Steve Nash was limited to seven and five assists.

In Denver, Carmelo Anthony, Andre Miller and the Nuggets ran the Timberwolves ragged in the Mile High City.

Anthony had 24 points and 10 rebounds and Miller added 17, seven rebounds and six assists to lead the Nuggets. Marcus Camby chipped in 12 points and 16 rebounds for Denver, which had lost by 14 points in each of the first two contests in the series but never trailed in this one.

It was the Nuggets' first playoff victory since winning Game Six of the 1994 conference semifinals against Utah. Denver lost Game Seven of that series, was swept in three games by San Antonio the following year and missed the playoffs the next eight seasons.

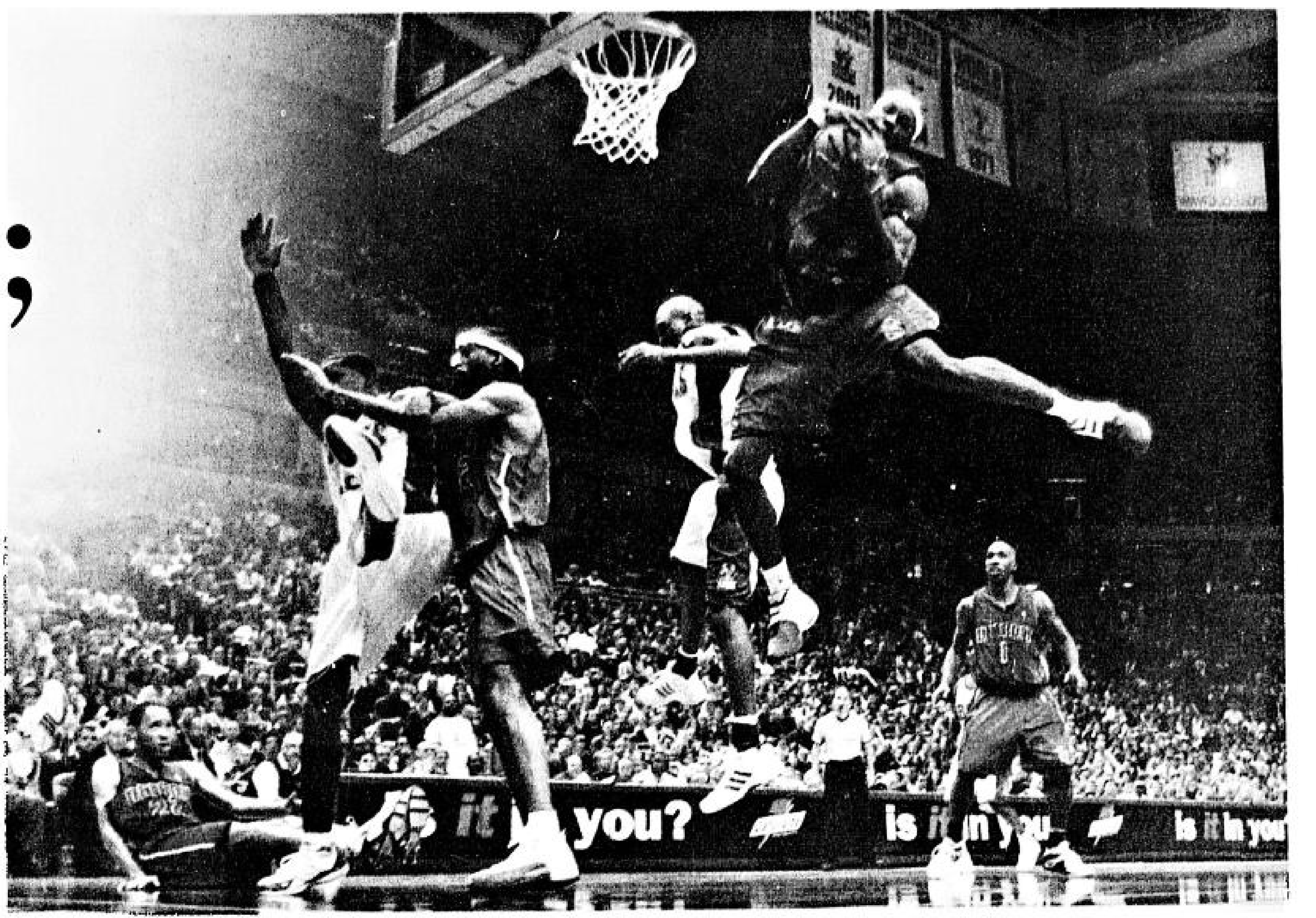
In New Orleans, Baron Davis scored 21 points and David Wesley added 18 as the Hornets overcame another sluggish offensive effort.

After an 81-79 defeat in game one, the Hornets shot just 24 percent from the field in Wednesday night's embarrassing 93-63 road loss. They shot just 35.5 percent (27-of-76) in this one.

PJ beats Elton

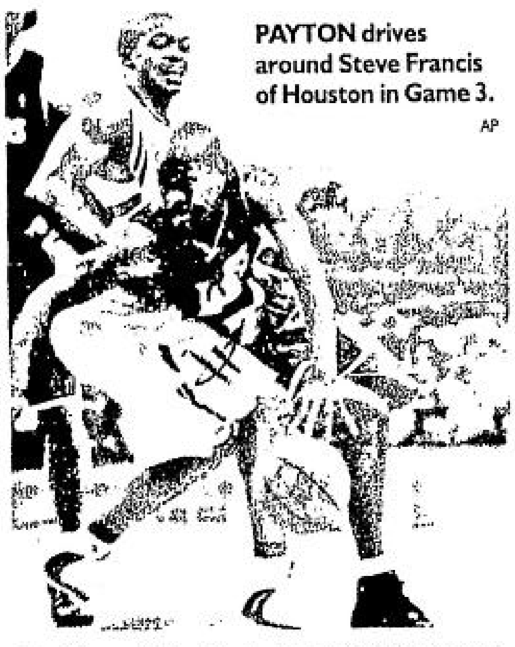
In New York, New Orleans Hornets forward P.J. Brown won the NBA's Sportsmanship Award on Saturday.

Brown beat forward Elton Brand of the Los Angeles Clippers in voting by NBA players, with 95 first-place votes and 1,220 points. *AFP, AP*



BEN Wallace (3) of the Detroit Pistons pulls down one of his 21 rebounds over forward Joe Smith of the Milwaukee Bucks. AFP

Payton unhappy over benching



PAYTON drives around Steve Francis of Houston in Game 3. AP

HOUSTON—Gary Payton has not played in the fourth quarter of the Los Angeles Lakers' last two playoff games, and he is clearly not happy about it.

The exact measure of Payton's discontent could not be determined Saturday, with Payton staying away from the media while the rest of the Los Angeles Lakers got ready to practice for Game 4 against the Houston Rockets.

Coach Phil Jackson has benched Payton in favor of Derek Fisher and Kareem Rush, both of whom have had their jump shots working much better than Payton's. And with the Rockets packing the middle to defend Shaquille O'Neal, outside shooting is at a premium for Los Angeles.

"I told him this morning, and he knows the reason why," Jackson said.

And how did Payton take the explanation?

"I don't know. He didn't say anything," Jackson said.

Jackson's fourth-quarter rotations and Payton's unhappiness have provided the latest plot twist to the Lakers' soap-opera season.

"If he wasn't a little disappointed, I would think less of him. So that's definitely to be expected," Karl Malone said.

Payton is shooting just 20 percent from 3-point range and 33 percent overall, and his defense is no longer as suffocating as it was earlier in his career when it earned him the nickname "The Glove."

"It's hard to maintain defense if you're not playing in the fourth quarter. I know it's got to be tough to not get the minutes you want," Houston's Steve Francis said.

Payton has played 103 career playoff games, and he was on the court during the fourth quarter of 101 of them.

Getting benched in the fourth quarter was certainly not in his plans when Payton signed on with the Lakers as a free agent last summer in a quest to win the championship that has eluded him for 14 seasons. It seems highly unlikely that Payton will return to Los Angeles next season if Jackson remains the coach.

"I don't care. Whatever he (Jackson) wants to do. It's on him," Payton said after Game 3, a 102-91 loss that trimmed the Lakers' lead to 2-1 in the best-of-seven series.

"I don't know what's going on between those two, but I don't think we should blow it up right now," said O'Neal, who felt slighted himself in Game 3 by the Lakers' inability to get him the ball during the second and third quarters. *AP*

Red Sox rip struggling Yankees

NEW YORK—Mark Bellhorn drove in Manny Ramirez in the 12th inning with Boston's third sacrifice fly, and the Red Sox defeated the New York Yankees, 3-2, Saturday, improving to 5-1 this season against their bitter rival.

Scott Williamson, Alan Embree, Keith Foulke (1-0) and Mike Timlin held the struggling Yankees offense without a run for six innings, increasing the bullpen's scoreless streak to 22 2-3 innings and helping Boston drop New York to 8-10.

"Our role is to go out there and hold them," Foulke said. "The guys in the dugout are going to score some runs."

Alex Rodriguez brought New York to 2-1 with his first homer in pinstripes and helped tie it by sparking a seventh-inning rally with a headfirst into first slide, then scoring on Gary Sheffield's single.

Paul Quantrill (2-1) was the loser, and Derek Jeter went 0-for-5, extending his hitless streak to a career-high 21 at-bats.

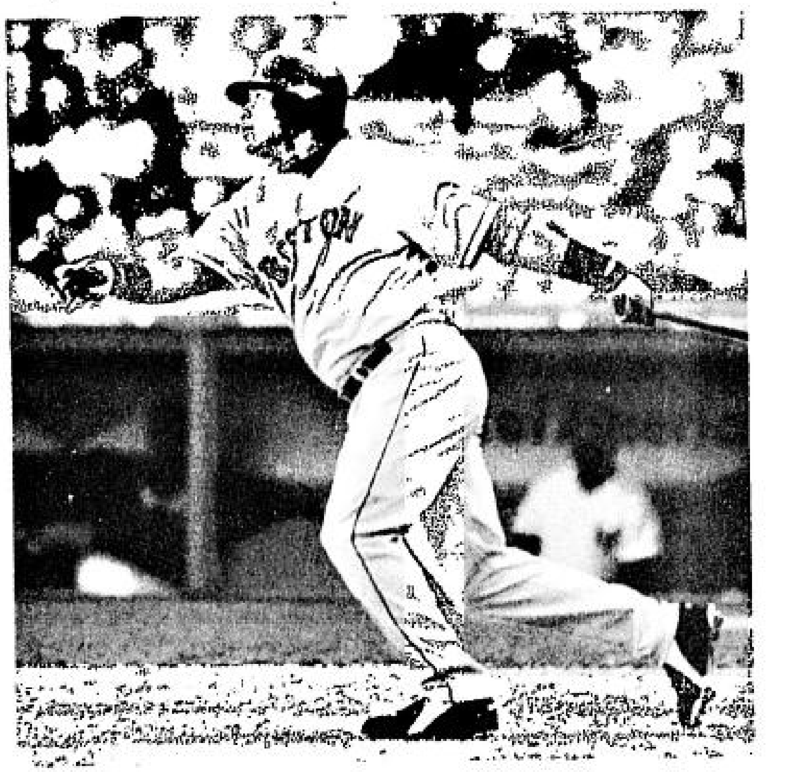
In Detroit, Rondell White hit a three-run homer off Chad Durbin in the ninth after Fernando Vina led off the inning with a bloop single to right off Scott Stewart (0-1) and Durbin intentionally walked Ivan Rodriguez as the Tigers beat the Cleveland Indians, 5-2.

Detroit (11-7) didn't get its 11th win last year until May 23, when it was 11-35. *AP*

Complete results:

American League—Boston 3, NY Yankees; Detroit 5, Cleveland 2; Tampa Bay 4, Chica W. Sox 1; Anaheim 6, Oakland 3; Toronto 5, Baltimore 4; Kansas City 10, Minnesota 1; Texas 3, Seattle 0.

National League—Philadelphia 7, Montreal 0; Milwaukee 3, St. Louis 1; Chicago Cubs 3, NY Mets 0; Houston 8, Colorado 5; Florida 7, Atlanta 4; Cincinnati 9, Pittsburgh 7; San Diego 4, Arizona 2; San Francisco 5, Los Angeles 3.



MANNY Ramirez of the Boston Red Sox hits a double. AFP

Red, Blue down rivals in PDI inter-color tilt

RED edged Yellow, 81-77, to stay unbeaten in the 2004 Philippine Daily Inquirer inter-color basketball tournament Saturday at the Olympia Sports Complex in Makati.

Sharing the day's honor was Blue which downed White, 70-67.

It was the fifth straight win in as many games for Red, while Blue improved to 4-2 to tie White. Yellow fell to 3-3.

Erik Arazas led Blue with a game-high 31 points, while Rolly Abad and Rolly Delluta added 14 and 13 points, respectively.

Scores:

First game:

BLUE 70—Arazas 31, Abad 14, Deluta 13, Punzalan 12, Labay 0, Ambrosio 0.

WHITE 67—Lagman 20, Sabado 17, Rago 15, Espinosa 8, Rodriguez 3, Cucio 2, Fua 2

Second Game:

RED 81—Cruz 19, Jaymalin 16, Marasigan 16, Mortel 11, Ruiz 11, Frias 3, Delgado 3, Caraga 2.

YELLOW 77—Badocdoc 25, Templonuevo 24, Valencia 10, Ilagan 10, Nuyda 8, De Gracia 0, Santos 0.

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CLEAN LIVING

Manolo R. Iñigo

THE MULTI-AWARDED Milo-BEST Center Clinic goes to Marilao, Bulacan, on May 17-22.

Aimed primarily at getting young people into sports and keeping them away from drugs during the summer vacation, the BEST Center Clinic is the benchmark of basketball training in the country being the oldest and most prestigious among the various summer clinics being held today.

Founded in 1978 by Nic Jorge, a former varsity cager of the University of the Philippines and national coach (he mentored the team that competed in the World Basketball Championships hosted by the Philippines in 1978 at age 36, one of the youngest RP coaches in memory), BEST Center pioneered in teaching the fundamentals of the game for boys and girls through a scientific and systematic approach.

Over the years, the center has taught countless youngsters not only the basics of basketball but also sound values such as discipline, sportsmanship and camaraderie through their interaction with their coaches, classmates and friends. Mainly because of its laudable objective, many have taken the challenge of organizing Milo-BEST Center clinics all over the country despite hard and difficult times.

In Marilao, chief organizer Pancho Manalad said, "We are holding again a Milo-BEST Clinic as our humble contribution to the sports and physical fitness program of the town."

Manalad also thanked the parents for allowing their children to join the weeklong session and three-term Mayor Nonoy Duran and Mahal Ko ang Marilao Movement chair Berna Duran-Velasco for supporting the project. "They all deserve a pat on the back."

It will mark the fourth time that Marilao will host this youth-oriented clinic. For more details, call Manalad at (044) 711-2481, Manu Iñigo at (02) 2400548 and Coleen Iñigo at (044) 9331214.

A mini-tournament among the graduates is held in the closing hour of the weeklong clinic while the lessons learned from the classes are later put into practice in tournaments like the popular Small Basketeers Philippines (SBP) and Passerelle Championships, the country's biggest inter-school cage competitions for elementary and high school students.

Since the center's founding, many have learned to play basketball the proper way. As a matter of fact, some of its products have used their BEST experience as a ladder to success, among them two-time PBA Most Valuable Player Benjie Paras, PBA Coach of the Year Perry Ronquillo, defense specialist Jerry Codiñera, PBA Rookies of the Year Jun Limpot and Boybits Victoria and PBA marquee players Paolo Mendoza, Rey Evangelista, Patrick Fran, Gerry Esplana and Poch Juinio.

BEST Center is only one of several summer projects supported by Milo as a corporate commitment. The others include Checkmate, Milo Marathon, taekwondo, golf, gymnastics, swimming, football, karatedo, volleyball, tennis, bowling, squash, badminton, table tennis and fencing.

***

WHO WANTS HO? It seems nobody wants Stanley Ho, the controversial Macau gambling mogul. As a result of a conferment of an honorary degree on Ho by the Angeles University Foundation, two highly respected former government officials—Jose Cuisia, former governor of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, and Jesus Estanislao, former finance secretary—were reported as having decided to return their own honorary doctorates from AUF.

They should be congratulated for their decision.

Earlier, Lingayen-Dagupan Archbishop Oscar Cruz, a past AUF honoree himself, had returned his own award, saying he just did not want to belong to the same league with a man who is known as having made his millions from gambling operations. Cruz heads the anti-gambling campaign of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines where he once served as president. And during the short-lived term of President Joseph Estrada, Ho chaired the much-disgraced BW Resources Corp., the gambling firm that nearly caused the total collapse of the securities market in 1999

Cruz and Cuisia "did not want to be included in the list of grantees along with Ho," while Estanislao "preferred to be excluded from the honor roll that bears the name of Ho."

The archbishop said he did not know Cuisia and Estanislao personally. "I only know about their decision when they wrote me saying that they have returned their doctorate diplomas to the AUF.

REUTERS

A SOCCER fan touches a picture of Maradona.

Maradona back on respirator, still in 'guarded condition'

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina—Diego Maradona was put back on an artificial respirator Saturday.

Maradona, who led Argentina to the 1986 World Cup title, has been in intensive care battling serious heart and lung problems for nearly a week.

The return to a breathing tube was meant to assist the 43-year-old former player with his breathing but did not mark any "worsening" of his health, a daily medical statement said.

Maradona remains in "guarded condition," the statement said, adding his recovery would be "slow and laborious."

Doctors are treating the Argentine soccer idol with drugs for a heart inflammation and antibiotics for a lung infection.

The statement, released at the Suizo Argentina Clinic where Maradona has been since his hospitalization last Sunday, came a day after he was taken off the respirator for the first time. Word that Maradona had gone to using a plastic oxygen mask had raised cheers among many of his fans.

Maradona has been undergoing drug rehabilitation for cocaine abuse in Cuba. But authorities said the emergency hospitalization was not drug-related.

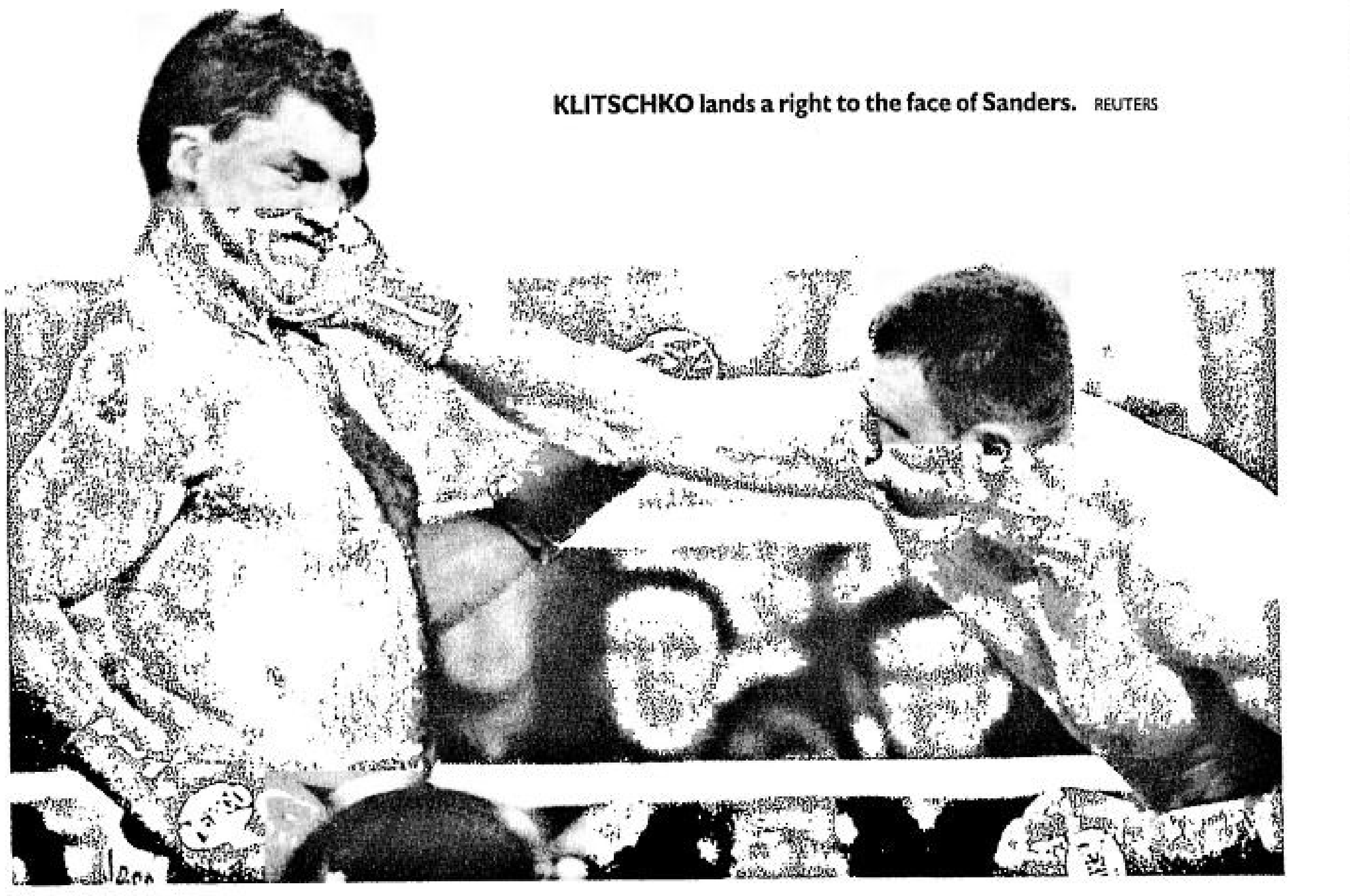
Outside the clinic there was a silent vigil, where fans have gathered noisily for days, beating drums, chanting Maradona's name and honking horns in a stadium-like atmosphere.

Only about 30 people stood around the clinic at midday Saturday. Many fans appeared to have heeded a call by Maradona's family to refrain from holding a larger rally outside the clinic.

Maradona's teenage daughters Dalma and Gianina asked Maradona's followers to pray for him and maintain quiet around the clinic. *AP*

Klitschko bags WBC heavy title

Sanders battered, bloodied


KLITSCHKO lands a right to the face of Sanders. REUTERS

LOS ANGELES—Vitali Klitschko began the night wanting to avenge his family's honor and win a heavyweight title.

He did that and more, staking his claim as the best heavyweight around with a devastating performance that left South Africa's Corrie Sanders battered, bloodied and thoroughly beaten.

Ukraine-born Klitschko gave a beating to the fighter who knocked out his brother, stopping Sanders late in the eighth round Saturday night to win the WBC title vacated by the retirement of Lennox Lewis.

He left the ring with the family's honor back, a gaudy green belt around his waist, and a big weight off of his shoulders.

"This was a big relief," Klitschko said.

Fighting in the same ring where he made a name for himself last year by going six brutal rounds with Lewis, Klitschko landed more than half the punches he threw in a fight that grew increasingly lopsided as the rounds went on.

Sanders managed to stun Klitschko in the opening round with a big left hand and kept trying to land it again, but took tremendous punishment every time he tried to lure his bigger opponent in.

Klitschko's brother, Wladimir, stared unblinkingly at Sanders while the fighters were introduced, and was the first in the ring to embrace Klitschko when the fight was called to an end at 2:46 of the eighth round with Sanders helpless along the ropes.

"I had a dream. It's just not my dream, it's a dream of the two brother's Klitschko," Klitschko said.

Sanders knocked out Wladimir Klitschko 13 months ago, but it was clear from the opening bell that Vitali would not make the same mistakes as his brother. Before Sanders beat Wladimir, he was thought to be the best of the two brothers from Ukraine.

Klitschko, perhaps mindful of what happened to his brother, stayed away early, got his rhythm after a few rounds and used his jab to set up right hands between Sanders' gloves.

The fight came to an end after Klitschko landed a big left-right and then backed Sanders up with a flurry of punches. Referee John Schorle kept watching to see if Sanders would respond, but when he didn't punch back he wrapped his arms around Sanders and called the fight to an end.

Sanders, a journeyman most of his career until he beat Klitschko's brother, never went down despite taking a tremendous beating.

Klitschko landed more than half of his punches, 230 of the 413 he threw to only 51 of 229 by Sanders. The only suspense after the early rounds was whether Sanders would land one big left hand to turn the fight around, and he couldn't.

"This was a big relief," said Klitschko (33-1, 32 knockouts). "I feel a lot of weight off my shoulders." *AP*

Sheehan joins 4-way tie in Houston

HUMBLE, Texas—Patrick Sheehan birdied his first hole of the third round Saturday to move into a four-way tie for the lead in the rain-delayed Houston Open.

He was tied with Rookie Zach Johnson, Steve Stricker and Steve Lowery at 5-under-par when play was suspended because of darkness.

Sheehan completed only No. 1 at the Redstone Golf Club, and his co-leaders had just teed off in the twilight when tournament officials called a halt because of darkness.

The round didn't begin until late afternoon after a rain delay of more than seven hours. When the rain stopped, 30 golfers took to the soggy course to finish a second round also cut short by bad weather and darkness.

Play was scheduled to resume at 8:30 a.m. EDT (1230 GMT) Sunday with the fourth round to follow as conditions allow. Officials hoped the final round could begin before noon, but the weather forecast called for more rain overnight.

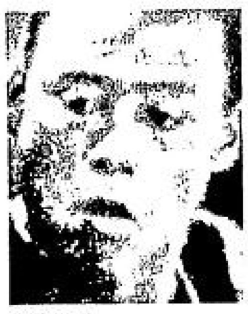
PGA Tour officials said the event could be extended to Monday.

"We have to complete 72 holes," tournament director Mark Russell said.

After play stopped Saturday evening, another heavy shower hit the course.

"Playing 36 holes, if that's what we have to do, you just go to the next round and that's a little bit of a pressure-free situation," said Lowery, who closed out the second round Friday with three birdies to grab a share of the lead after two rounds. *AP*

Jones, Montgomery used steroids, says report


JONES

SAN FRANCISCO—A nutritionist charged with distributing illegal drugs to professional athletes told federal agents he gave steroids to US track stars Marion Jones and Tim Montgomery in exchange for endorsements, a newspaper reported Saturday night.

The story on the San Francisco Chronicle's Web site, quoting sources who requested anonymity, said Bay Area Laboratory Co-Operative founder Victor Conte told the federal investigators that Jones and Montgomery received the performance-enhancing substances in exchange for endorsements of his nutritional supplement.

A lawyer for Jones told the Chronicle that the newspaper's story was wrong. A lawyer for Conte told the newspaper that the lab owner denied ever providing information to federal agents about any specific athletes receiving steroids.

Jones' lawyer, Joseph Burton, did not immediately respond to telephone and e-mail messages from The Associated Press. Conte's attorneys, Robert Holley and Troy Ellerman, did not immediately respond to phone and e-mail messages from the AP.

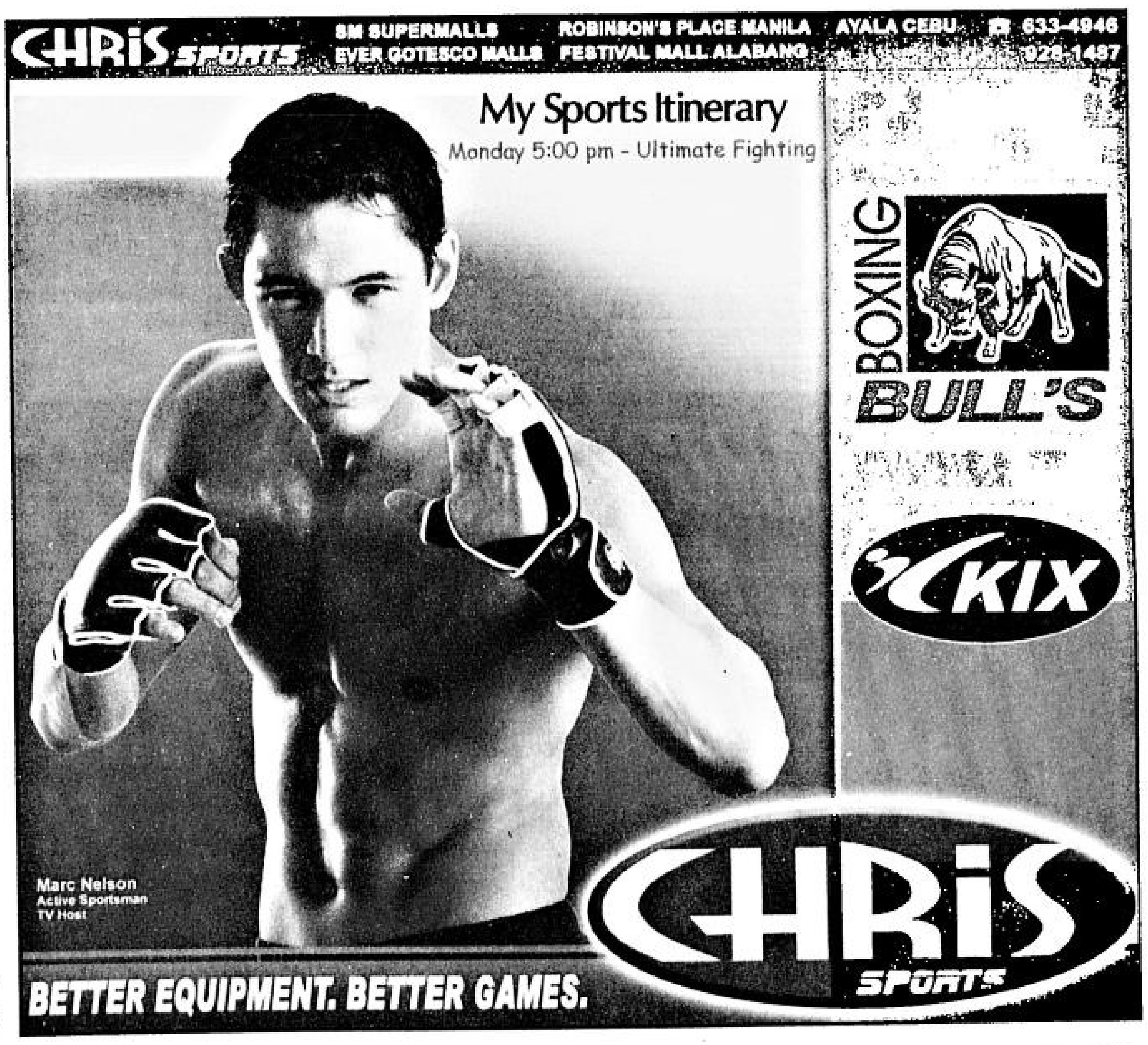
Conte said in an e-mail message to the AP that he couldn't comment. Jones' publicist, Lewis Kay, could not be reached for comment. *AP*

Teammate giving way to Thorpe

BRISBANE, Australia—A month after Ian Thorpe unceremoniously toppled into the Sydney Olympic pool while trying to qualify for the Athens 400-meter freestyle, the 21-year-old Australian is expected to be given a starting spot.

Craig Stevens, Thorpe's teammate who finished second to Grant Hackett in the 400 at the Australian Olympic trials after Thorpe was disqualified on March 27, was scheduled to appear on a national current affairs television show Monday evening to announce his decision on whether he will compete in the 400.

Stevens, who was paid about US$45,000 to tell his story on the Seven network's "Today, Tonight" show, also qualified for the 1,500-meter race behind Hackett, an event in which he has a medal chance. *AP*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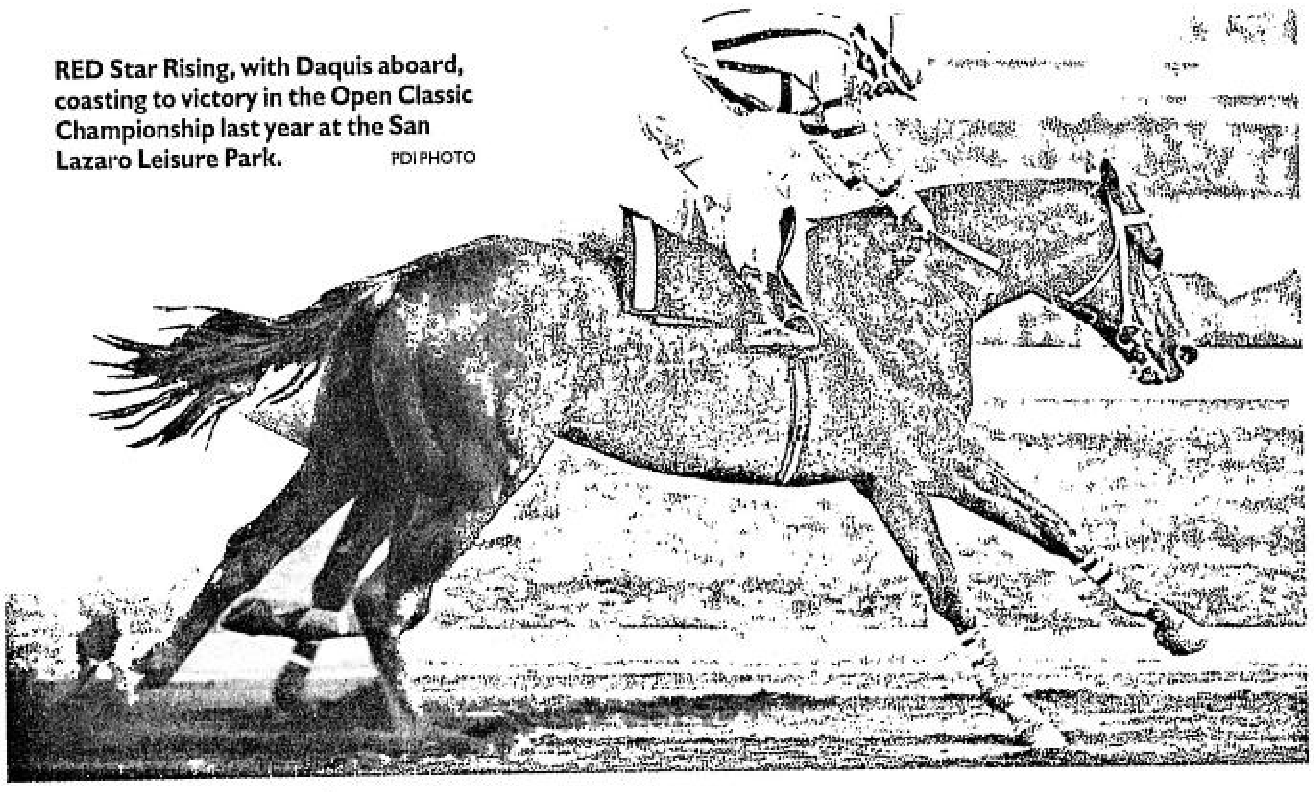
P1M FOR TRILLANAS

Red Star Rising captures FG Cup



RED Star Rising, with Daquis aboard, coasting to victory in the Open Classic Championship last year at the San Lazaro Leisure Park. PDI PHOTO

By Edwin Villanueva

RED Star Rising rose to the occasion again, winning the 9th First Gentleman's Silver Cup and capping a victorious weekend for the Trillana Stable yesterday at the San Lazaro Leisure Park.

A powerful kick at the far turn was all Red Star Rising needed to wallop the field by six lengths over the distance tailored-fit for his running style—2,000 meters.

Red Star Rising's victory worth P1 million came on the heels of equally impressive wins last Saturday by his stablemates Cool Runnings and Shadowfax, both Triple Crown contenders this year, making it a perfect 3-for-3 for Francis Trillana and son Michael.

"I had a strong feeling this could be our weekend after Cool Runnings and Shadowfax won yesterday. Thank God Red Star Rising also delivered," said Francis Trillana, a former racing commissioner.

"I would also like to commend Lito Daquis for another brilliant ride and Ruben Clor for conditioning the horse superbly," added Trillana.

Red Star Rising ran ninth in the early going and started to dig in at the backside. When Daquis asked for the juice, the Khozaam-Ito's Choice progeny went flying on the outside, passing tiring rivals with ease and sprinting ahead for good entering the top of the stretch.

"*Marami pa. Di ko na ginamitan ng pamalo* (He still has plenty to spare. No need for me to use the whip)," said Daquis, whose bumping-and-grinding prowess powered the 4-year-old chestnut colt to victories in the Presidential Gold Cup and Open Classic last year.

Material Maker, who challenged Red Star Rising briefly at the backside, checked in second for P350,000, while San Diego Force landed third for P175,000.

Dandansoy was fourth, while War Hero and Mica's Magic arrived fifth and sixth, respectively.

Red Star Rising negotiated the race in 2:09 (25-25-26-26.5-26.5). It was his second straight win since losing in the Freedom Cup and Commissioner's Cup.

"We'll rest him for a while then plan for his next outing," Trillana said of Red Star Rising whose breeder is Jose "Bebo" Quiros, also a former Philracom commissioner.

Last Saturday, Cool Runnings (Treasure Cay-Discreetly) and Shadowfax (Conquistarose-Northen Edge), both guided by Val Dilema, revved up their preparations for the Cojuangco Cup on May 23 by topping their respective class division races.

Cool Runnings, also bred by Quiros, humbled Don Paolo in Race 7, while Shadowfax, a full brother to former TC champ Silver Story, came from behind to rule Race 10.

Sinister G out of Derby

LOUISVILLE, Kentucky—Sinister G will not run in the Kentucky Derby because of a lingering cough, reshuffling the list of automatic qualifiers.

"We're out," Sinister G trainer John Toscano said from Belmont Park, where the Matty G colt has been training. "Sometimes Mother Nature takes over and if the horse is not right, to put him in the Derby would be foolish."

Sinister G was 16th on the list of graded stakes earnings for 3-year-olds. Only the top 20 earners qualify for the May 1 Derby and the colt's withdrawal moves Song of the Sword into the field.

Value Plus, 17th on the graded stakes list, is another likely Derby defection after a sixth-place finish in the Wood Memorial. If that happens, Pro Prado would move into the 20th spot.

"Last week at this time, we were 25th and I didn't really think we would get in," Pro Prado trainer Robert Holthus said. "I am happy we'll get the chance."

St. Averil, 18th on the list, was questionable for the Derby because of foot problems.

Counting on more defections, Rock Hard Ten principal owner Ernie Moody scratched his colt from Saturday's one-mile, Grade 3 Derby Trial.

Sinister G's departure moved Rock Hard Ten to 23rd on the graded stakes list.

"My feeling is our horse deserves to be in the Derby," Moody said Friday. "He belongs there."

Rock Hard Ten finished second to Castledale in the Santa Anita Derby, but was dropped to third place when stewards ruled he blocked another horse's path. The penalty cost Rock Hard Ten $60,000 in earnings—enough to have already ensured the colt a Derby berth.

The dark brown colt galloped in a light drizzle Friday as trainer Jason Orman awaited Moody's decision on the Trial. News of Sinister G's withdrawal gave Orman hope.

"It's starting to look like we have a chance to get in," he said Saturday. *AP*

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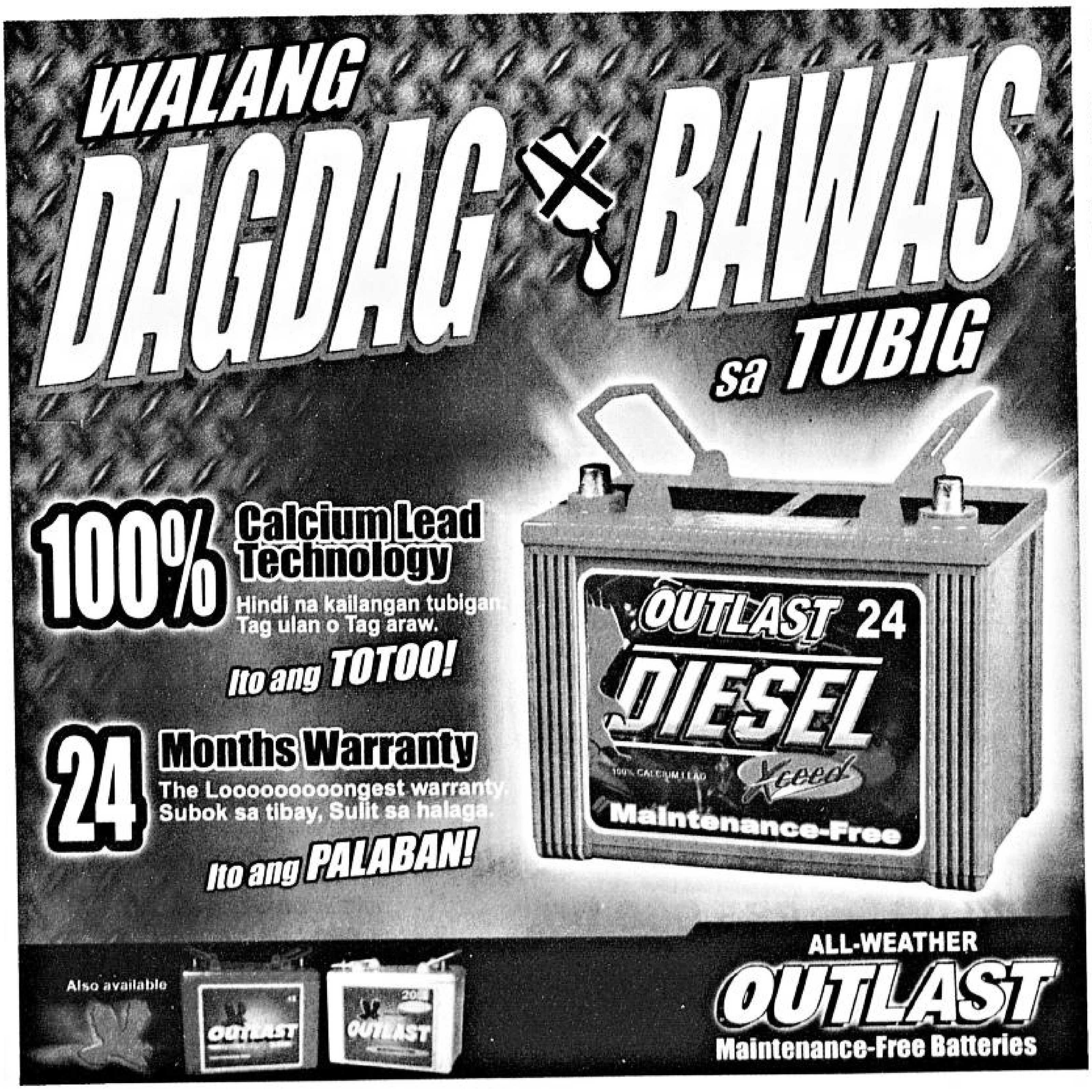
ASIAN CHAMP
Yun Jun-jae of South Korea reaches out as the shuttlecock bounces off the floor during her women's singles final match against Wang Chen of Hong Kong in the Asian Badminton tilt at Cheras Stadium in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, yesterday. Yun won, 11-9, 11-7. AP



Chinese scoops 2 golds in team foil

By Trina Ibarle

POWERHOUSE China picked up two more golds with a sweep of the team foil event yesterday even as host Philippines came close to reaching the women's semifinal in the 2004 Sharp Asian Fencing Championships at the Philsports Arena.

The taller and shiftier trio of Huang Liangcai, Zhu Jun, and Zhang Linglian crushed the Japanese, 45-30, in the men's final while Liu Yuan, Ma Na and Su Wanwen outclassed the Koreans, 45-26, for the women's championship.

The twin golds raised China's golden output to eight, including five in the individual events. The Chinese also won the women's team epee the other day.

China is also expected to dominate today's sabre team events which will cap the eight-day tournament bankrolled by Sharp Philippines and organized by the Philippine Amateur Fencing Association.

Earlier, Filipinas Mely Joyce Angeles, Roberta Gonzales and Veena Nuestro moved within 41-43 of the Hong Kong trio in their duel for a semifinal slot in the women's foil.

But Lin Po Heung spoiled RP's rally with successive hits on Nuestro to secure Hong Kong's 45-41 victory.

Meanwhile, Emerson Segui, Rolando Canlas and Ramil Endriano found the Japanese just too tough and lost, 45-21, in the quarterfinals.

The team of Wally Mendoza, Edward Daliva, vastly improved Gian Carlo Nokom and Edward Velez are seeing action in the men's sabre event today along with Joanna Franquelli, Wendylyne Mendoza, Jinky Naval and Nuestro.

Lance retains 'yellow'

HIAWASSEE, Georgia—Five-time Tour de France winner Lance Armstrong held the lead in the Tour de Georgia cycling race with a third-place finish Saturday.

But Cesar Grajales of Colombia overcame Armstrong, a flat tire and Georgia's highest peak to win the sixth stage. Grajales, who had climbed Brasstown Bald five times before the Tour, attacked a lead break of Armstrong, Jens Voigt of Germany and defending champion Chris Horner with 3 km to go.

Armstrong retained the overall leader's jersey for the fourth straight stage with a time of 22:19.05. Voigt is second, 24 seconds back. *AP*

French Fed Cuppers ahead

DEFENDING Fed Cup champion France took a quick 2-0 lead over Germany in the first round of the World Group on Saturday, while co-favorites Belgium and the United States were held to 1-1 spilts in their respective ties.

Amelie Mauresmo and Nathalie Dechy each won their singles matches as the French moved just one win shy of clinching victory and advancing to the quarterfinals. *AP*

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Tonyboy group eyes IPO for media unit

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE GROUP of Antonio "Tonyboy" Cojuangco is planning to go public so it could raise more funds for the expansion of its media business within the next three years, according to Jose Pardo, chair of Associated Broadcasting Corp.

Pardo said the group has yet to decide on whether it would be ABC-5 that would undertake an initial public offering (IPO) or another Cojuangco-controlled firm like Franchise One Corp.

"The plan is to do an IPO within a three-year period. It could be ABC 5 or Franchise One. We plan to go public only when the stock market had recovered sufficiently," Pardo said in an interview.

Cojuangco led a group of businessmen that acquired ABC-5 from Edward Tan for about P4.5 billion in October 2003.

The consortium that now owns ABC-5 is majority-owned by Cojuangco and 32 percent by DM Archers of banker Raul de Mesa. De Mesa is president of Cojuangco-controlled Bank of Commerce.

The ABC-5 official said he was confident that the company would start to turn around financially after years of consecutive losses.

"Judging from the flow of advertisers, we should start earning next year, if not this year," Pardo said. He said ABC-5 would bank on its strategic alliances to boost its programming and marketing.

Franchise One owns Dream Broadcasting System, the satellite-based cable provider that wanted to put up cozy theaters in the provinces.

Pardo said ABC-5 had embarked on a P1-billion expansion program to break the duopoly of fierce rivals ABS-CBN and GMA-7. He said the priorities included the upgrading of transmission facilities so that Channel 5's signal would be comparable to that of other networks.

"There was a time when viewers would just go between channels 2 and 7. Now, they are flicking the remote at 5 and our objective is to make them stay. We plan to move on from being a strong third to being second eventually," added the ABC-5 chair.

He said the company would also purchase new broadcast equipment and modernize other network facilities to make the station more competitive, especially its News and Public Affairs.

ABC-5 spent P400 million of its P1-billion capital for new cameras, editing equipment, 15 vehicles and two electronic newsgathering vans.

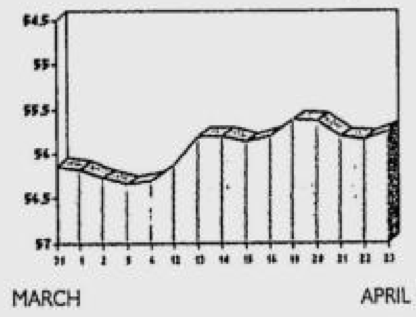
"We have a tie-up with Dream Satellite so news gathering could be eventually done via satellite. We are the only channel that would have this technology," said Pardo, former finance secretary.

Pardo said ABC-5's programming would go through a creative restructuring to make it appeal to viewers who prefer the no-nonsense type of shows.

Channel 5 has lined up the likes of professional basketball's PBA, the Probe Team, Inquirer's magazine news show InqTV, a reality show similar to American Idol and new soap operas and variety shows.

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES



PESO-DOLLAR RATE

P 55.75 = $1
As of 5 p.m., April 23, 2004

¥ 109.28= $1
As of 5 p.m., April 23, 2004

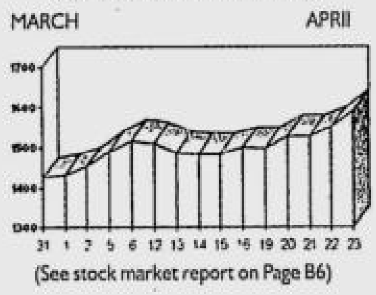
GOLD: $393.90-394.40
per ounce Hong Kong, April 23, 2004

STOCK MARKET

April 23, 2004 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.839208	1.000000	55.8350
Japan	Yen	0.007672	0.009142	0.5104
United Kingdom	Pound	1.488671	1.773900	99.0457
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.107612	0.128230	7.1597
Switzerland	Franc	0.641989	0.764994	42.7134
Canada	Dollar	0.619662	0.738389	41.2279
Singapore	Dollar	0.494845	0.589657	32.9235
Australia	Dollar	0.612382	0.729714	40.7436
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.226134	2.652661	148.1113
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.223789	0.266667	14.8894
Brunei	Dollar	0.493390	0.587924	32.8267
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000097	0.000116	0.0065
Thailand	Baht	0.021171	0.025227	1.4085
UAE	Dirham	0.228493	0.272272	15.2023
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.191600	66.5330
Argentina	Peso	0.292917	0.349040	19.4886
Brazil	Real	0.286713	0.341647	19.0759
Denmark	Kroner	0.134385	0.160133	8.9410
India	Rupee	0.019056	0.022707	1.2678
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.220874	0.263193	14.6954
Mexico	New Peso	0.073972	0.088145	4.9216
New Zealand	Dollar	0.523588	0.623908	34.8359
Norway	Kroner	0.121380	0.144636	8.0758
Pakistan	Rupee	0.014641	0.017446	0.9741
South Africa	Rand	0.122467	0.145932	8.1481
Korea	Won	0.000724	0.000863	0.0482
Sweden	Kroner	0.109359	0.130312	7.2760
Syria	Pound	0.016232	0.019342	1.0800
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.025469	0.030349	1.6945
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000438	0.000522	0.0291

Buying momentum seen faltering

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B6)

DESPITE rocketing to a new high last week, buying momentum may not be as strong this week as traders stay on the sidelines on rumors of labor day unrest.

But some analysts said the market may still have some fire left after last week's late burst due to bets of a better first quarter for most blue-chip firms.

"In the coming weeks, we will be in the midst of first-quarter earnings reporting. Companies have boosted their 2004 earnings forecasts, fueling optimism profit will increase enough this year to warrant further gains in share prices," said Jose Vistan of AB Capital Securities Inc.

The Philippine Stock Exchange composite index surged 91 points or

BUYING/ B6

BCDA wants out of Northrail project

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE BASES Conversion Development Authority is relinquishing the $503-million North Rail Transit project to another government agency, according to BCDA president Rufo Colayco.

In a press briefing, Colayco said this was because the present project was no longer the same concept that the BCDA had been tasked to undertake originally.

"The Northrail project initially aimed to cater to commuter needs that would arise based on the abandoned plan to transfer the country's main international airport to Pampanga in the former Clark Air Base," the official explained.

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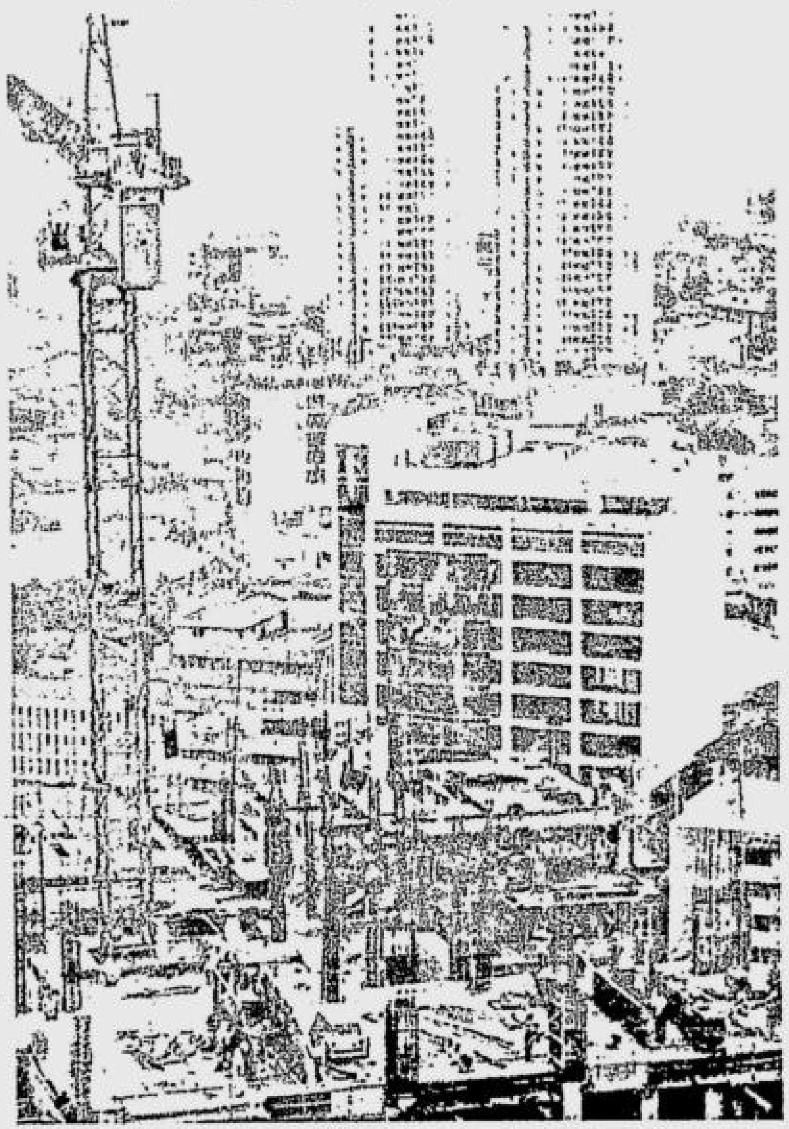
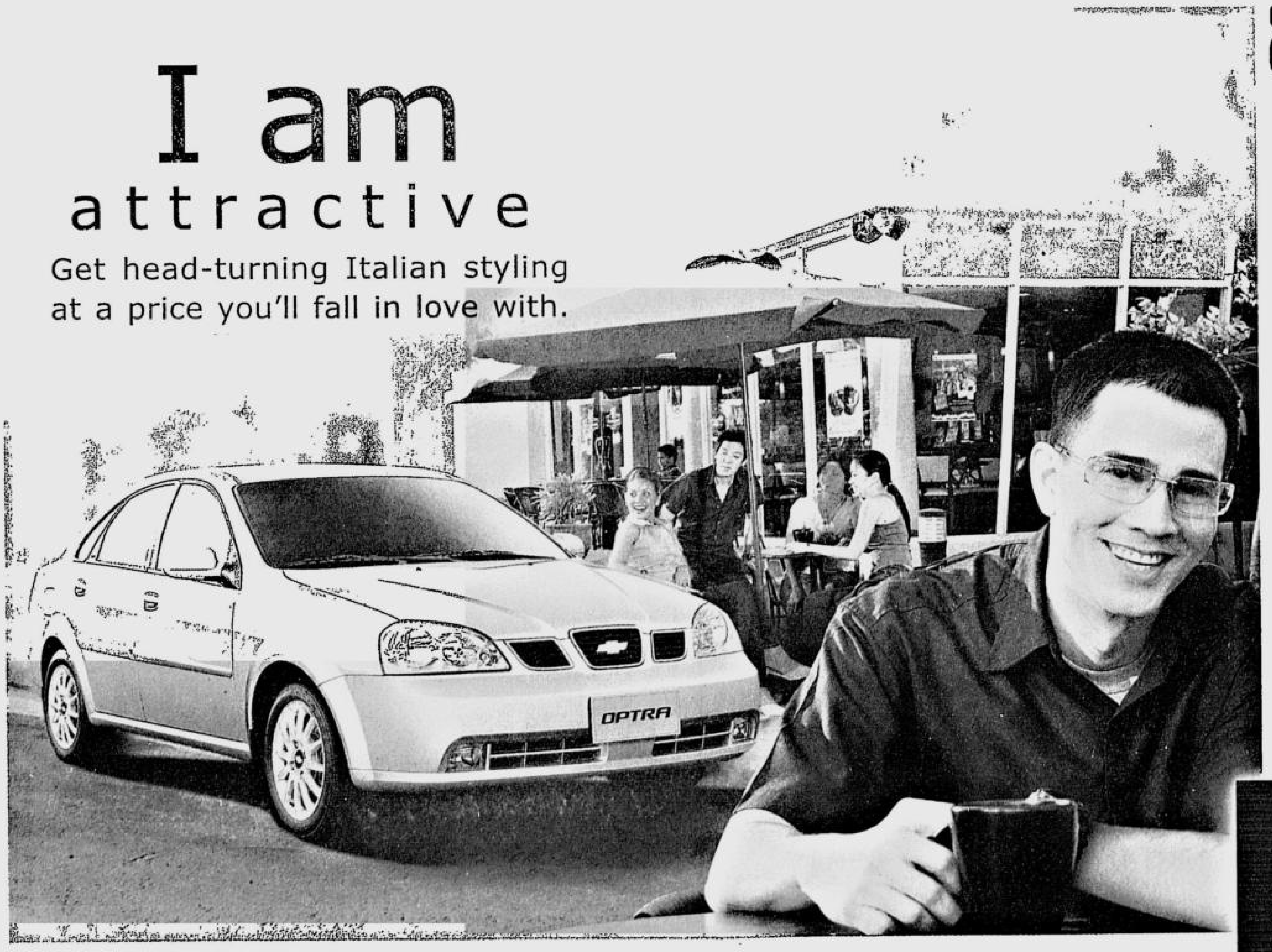
BCDA/ B6



CONSTRUCTION workers build an office tower in the business district of Makati. Still, investors are on a standby mode ahead of the May 10 presidential election.

AFP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Tonyboy group eyes IPO for media unit

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE GROUP of Antonio "Tonyboy" Cojuangco is planning to go public so it could raise more funds for the expansion of its media business within the next three years, according to Jose Pardo, chair of Associated Broadcasting Corp.

Pardo said the group has yet to decide on whether it would be ABC-5 that would undertake an initial public offering (IPO) or another Cojuangco-controlled firm like Franchise One Corp.

"The plan is to do an IPO within a three-year period. It could be ABC 5 or Franchise One. We plan to go public only when the stock market had recovered sufficiently," Pardo said in an interview.

Cojuangco led a group of businessmen that acquired ABC-5 from Edward Tan for about P4.5 billion in October 2003.

The consortium that now owns ABC-5 is majority-owned by Cojuangco and 32 percent by DM Archers of banker Raul de Mesa. De Mesa is president of Cojuangco-controlled Bank of Commerce.

The ABC-5 official said he was confident that the company would start to turn around financially after years of consecutive losses.

"Judging from the flow of advertisers, we should start earning next year, if not this year," Pardo said. He said ABC-5 would bank on its strategic alliances to boost its programming and marketing.

Franchise One owns Dream Broadcasting System, the satellite-based cable provider that wanted to put up cozy theaters in the provinces.

Pardo said ABC-5 had embarked on a P1-billion expansion program to break the duopoly of fierce rivals ABS-CBN and GMA-7. He said the priorities included the upgrading of transmission facilities so that Channel 5's signal would be comparable to that of other networks.

"There was a time when viewers would just go between channels 2 and 7. Now, they are flicking the remote at 5 and our objective is to make them stay. We plan to move on from being a strong third to being second eventually," added the ABC-5 chair.

He said the company would also purchase new broadcast equipment and modernize other network facilities to make the station more competitive, especially its News and Public Affairs.

ABC-5 spent P400 million of its P1-billion capital for new cameras, editing equipment, 15 vehicles and two electronic newsgathering vans.

"We have a tie-up with Dream Satellite so news gathering could be eventually done via satellite. We are the only channel that would have this technology," said Pardo, former finance secretary.

Pardo said ABC-5's programming would go through a creative restructuring to make it appeal to viewers who prefer the no-nonsense type of shows.

Channel 5 has lined up the likes of professional basketball's PBA, the Probe Team, Inquirer's magazine news show InqTV, a reality show similar to American Idol and new soap operas and variety shows.

C RI

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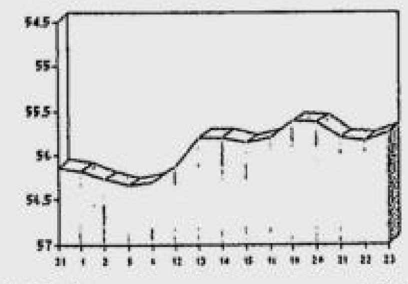


MARCH APRIL

₱ 55.75 = $1
As of 5 p.m., April 23, 2004

¥ 109.28 = $1
As of 5 p.m., April 23, 2004

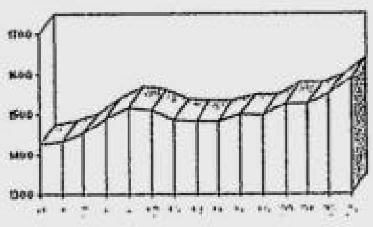
GOLD: $393.90-394.40
per ounce Hong Kong, April 23, 2004

April 23, 2004 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.839208	1.000000	55.8350
Japan	Yen	0.007672	0.009142	0.5104
United Kingdom	Pound	1.488671	1.773900	99.0457
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.107612	0.128230	7.1597
Switzerland	Franc	0.641989	0.764994	42.7134
Canada	Dollar	0.619662	0.738389	41.2279
Singapore	Dollar	0.494845	0.589657	32.9235
Australia	Dollar	0.612382	0.729714	40.7436
Bahrain	Dinar	2.226134	2.652661	148.1113
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.223789	0.266667	14.8894
Brunei	Dollar	0.493390	0.587924	32.8267
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000097	0.000116	0.0065
Thailand	Baht	0.021171	0.025227	1.4085
UAE	Dirham	0.228493	0.272272	15.2023
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.191600	66.5330
Argentina	Peso	0.292917	0.349040	19.4886
Brazil	Real	0.286713	0.341647	19.0759
Denmark	Kroner	0.134385	0.160133	8.9410
India	Rupee	0.019056	0.022707	1.2678
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.220874	0.263193	14.6954
Mexico	New Peso	0.073972	0.088145	4.9216
New Zealand	Dollar	0.523588	0.623908	34.8359
Norway	Kroner	0.121380	0.144636	8.0758
Pakistan	Rupee	0.014641	0.017446	0.9741
South Africa	Rand	0.122467	0.145932	8.1481
Korea	Won	0.000724	0.000863	0.0482
Sweden	Kroner	0.109359	0.130312	7.2760
Syria	Pound	0.016232	0.019342	1.0800
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.025469	0.030349	1.6945
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000438	0.000522	0.0291

Buying momentum seen faltering

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX

MARCH APRIL



(See stock market report on Page B6)

DESPITE rocketing to a new high last week, buying momentum may not be as strong this week as traders stay on the sidelines on rumors of labor day unrest.

But some analysts said the market may still have some fire left after last week's late burst due to bets of a better first quarter for most blue-chip firms.

"In the coming weeks, we will be in the midst of first-quarter earnings reporting. Companies have boosted their 2004 earnings forecasts, fueling optimism profit will increase enough this year to warrant further gains in share prices," said Jose Vistan of AB Capital Securities Inc.

The Philippine Stock Exchange composite index surged 91 points or

BUYING: B6

BCDA wants out of Northrail project

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE BASES Conversion Development Authority is relinquishing the $503-million North Rail Transit project to another government agency, according to BCDA president Rufo Colayco.

In a press briefing, Colayco said this was because the present project was no longer the same concept that the BCDA had been tasked to undertake originally.

"The Northrail project initially aimed to cater to commuter needs that would arise based on the abandoned plan to transfer the country's main international airport to Pampanga in the former Clark Air Base," the official explained.

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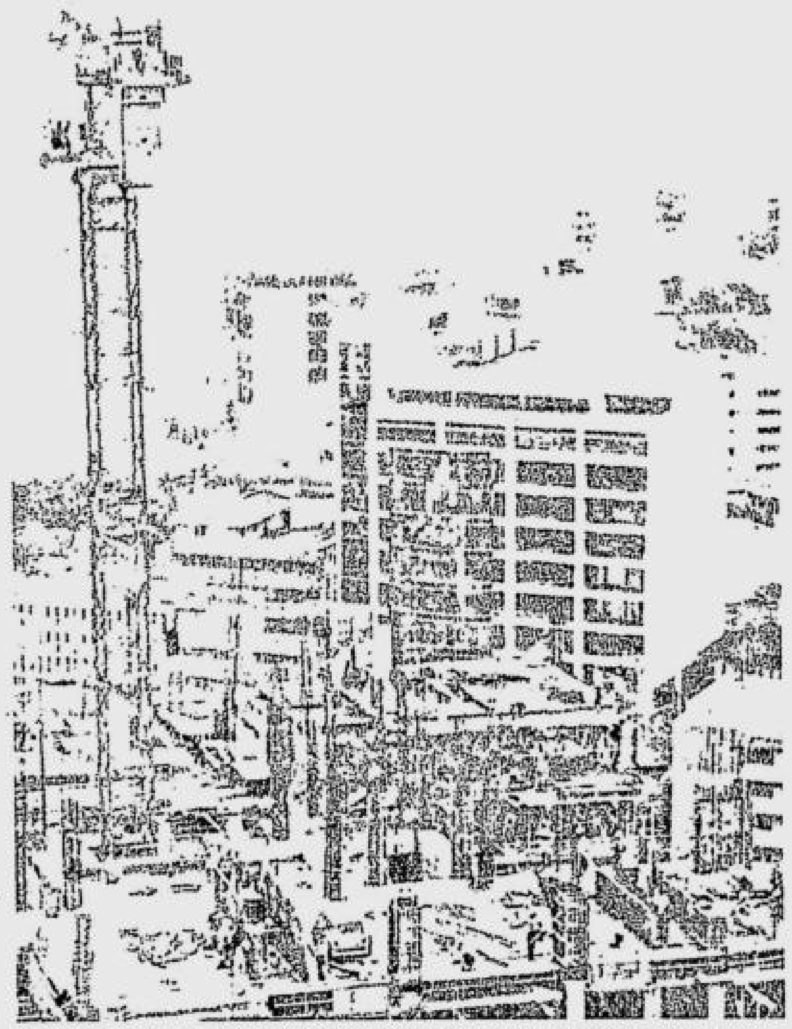
BCDA: B6



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US firm Lexmark shells out ₱1B to expand Cebu plant operations

By Ronnel W. Domingo

LEXMARK International (Philippines) Inc. has laid out some P1 billion to expand its inkjet printer cartridge production plant in Cebu, a company official said.

According to Glenn Westerman, LIPI president and chief executive, the latest capital expenditure meant that the American firm had invested some P9 billion in the country since it started operations here in 1999.

The LIPI software and hardware development facilities in Cebu is a mirror image of Lexmark facilities in Kentucky in the United States, he added.

"One facility picks up on the work of the other when either of them closes for the day," Westerman said.

He said Lexmark had chosen to locate its Asian operations here not only because of the 12-hour time difference but also because "the Philippines is English-driven."

"Having a workforce proficient in English eliminates the dangers in translation," Westerman said. "Errors in translating technical terms could mean turning out a lot of bad products, and we don't want that to happen."

TAX EXEMPTION

Hold the perks, DOF urges Palace

By Michelle V. Remo

THE DEPARTMENT of Finance is urging Malacañang to delay the plan to restore duty-free privilege to firms importing capital equipment.

The Palace move, according to DOF officials, would result in significant revenue losses for the government.

In a letter to the Office of the President, the finance department said government should allot a period of about two years for Congress to study whether the incentive is indeed necessary to develop the export industry.

Citing historical data from the Board of Investments, the DOF said duty-free importation of capital equipment resulted in foregone revenue ranging from P630 million to P1 billion per year until the law granting the incentive lapsed in 1999.

DOF also said that should the law be restored, the government must put in place measures that would limit the coverage of the duty-free privilege and tighten procedures in securing the incentive.

The finance department recommended that firms should first secure a certificate of authority to import from the BOI before it may avail itself of the duty exemption. The move would ensure that the incentives are only enjoyed by the intended beneficiaries, the DOF explained.

The finance department also suggested that the duty exemption be granted exclusively to BOI-registered firms engaged in exports. Domestic-oriented firms, even those registered with the BOI, should not be entitled to the same privilege.

The government agency likewise said the duty-free privilege should only apply to capital equipment that are not locally available. A minimum duty of one percent should be imposed on BOI-registered firms not engaged in exports, the DOF said.

"This recommendations have been the policy stance of the DOF in its effort to rationalize the fiscal incentives system," Finance Secretary Juanita Amatong said in her letter to Malacañang.

The plan to restore duty exemption in the importation of capital equipment was proposed by Rep. Joey Salceda. The move is being backed by the Department of Trade and Industry, which said that the incentive would enhance global competitiveness of local businesses.

The finance department, together with other members of the inter-agency Development Budget Coordination Committee, however, said that the fiscal incentives granted to investors should be reviewed because some of those are irrelevant and tend to hurt government's revenue-generation efforts.

The DBCC said some of the fiscal incentives available in this country, such as income tax holidays enjoyed by large exporting firms, are unreasonable because the purpose behind the granting fiscal support is to make new and struggling businesses viable.

The DBCC estimated that the government loses about P40 billion per year from fiscal incentives.

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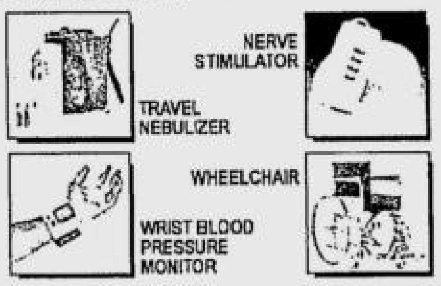

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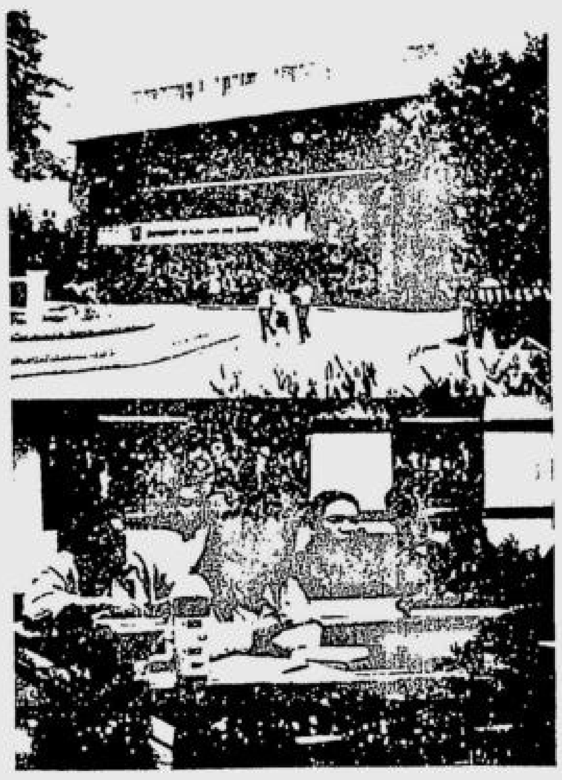

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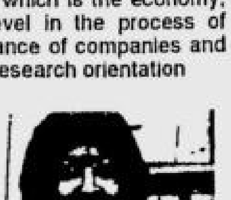

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2nd generation SM

COCKTALES

Victor C. Agustin

THE RAGS-TO-RICHES story of the SM Group passed a watershed event last week when taipan Henry Sy Sr. formally relinquished the president/CEO titles for his related companies in favor of his children.

On Thursday, the 79-year-old taipan named his fourth child, Hans, 48, as president of SM Prime Holdings, the publicly listed shopping mall developer and operator.

The following day, "Tatang" also relinquished the CEO title of SM Development Corp., the real estate arm of the SM Group, in favor of Henry "Big Boy" Jr.

The third child and eldest of four boys, Big Boy, 51, was also named vice chair of SM Development, with his father retaining the chairman's title.

A De La Salle management graduate, Big Boy tried to downplay his and his brother's promotions.

"We still work for the family. We were just given more day-to-day responsibilities," he said. "Our father remains active, still looking over our shoulders."

For years now, the eldest of the Sy children, Teresita, 54, has been chair of the family's Banco de Oro, in addition to being president of ShoeMart Inc., the retail division.

Of all the six Sy children, Tessie, according to the Sy's partner in Megamall, former Ambassador Frank Alba, "thinks and acts most like her father."

And like the children of the other taipans who built their empires out of the ruins of World War II, the Sy children have apparently settled comfortably in their parent-designated roles within their sprawling businesses.

Second child Elizabeth, 52, is in charge of the hotel business and investor relations. Herbert, 47, is on top of the supermarket operations, while Harley, the youngest at 44, assists Tessie in the sprawling retail division.

Given the increasing saturation of the Philippine market, the Sys have been looking to their former homeland, China, for expansion.

Next month, the Sys are groundbreaking on an eight-hectare mall and residential development in Chengdu City in Sichuan province, the family's second project in the mainland.

Closer to Makati, the Sys have partnered with the Madrigals to develop 100 hectares of Susana Heights into a mid- and up-market subdivision, offering house-and-lot packages in land areas ranging from 180-550 square meters.

In defeat, defiance

HAD billionaire-polo player Albert "Bobby" Aguirre spent the energy and resources he expended fighting his siblings instead on the family bank, Banco Filipino would have easily regained the top spot it once gloriously occupied.

Despite losing an expensive and protracted legal battle in Seattle, Bobby again instructed his US lawyers to appeal a decision after a jury trial denied his attempt to foreclose on the retirement home business of his sister Nanette.

Last week, US District Court Judge Robert Lasnik denied Bobby's appeal, saying the jury had been correct in finding the testimony of Nanette and her American husband to be "both credible and convincing" as against the testimonies of Bobby's employees.

Bobby claimed that the $4 million given by their late father to Nanette, which she used to build a home for the aged, had been a loan from the Aguirre companies.

Nanette claimed, on the other hand, that the money had been a gift by their dying father precisely to protect her from the feud Bobby then had with their brother Ady.

Heard through the grapevine

A SENIOR Union Bank official is being sued for child support by his estranged wife for their five-year-old child.

The mestiza wife, a former Binibining Pilipinas contestant, is herself, now 30, young enough to be the banker's daughter.

(Email: cocktales_pdi@yahoo.com or cocktales_pdi@hotmail.com.)

PNB seeks developer for Buendia lot

By Doris C. Dumlao

PHILIPPINE National Bank is planning a joint venture with potential partners for the development of its P2-billion 8,000-square meter property in Buendia, Makati, into a Rockwell-type complex.

The controversial property, which was foreclosed after being previously sold for P3.68 billion to businessman Ramon "RJ" Jacinto who used PNB financing, is the single biggest real and other property owned and acquired (ropoa) hounding the bank.

PNB executive vice president Federico Cadiz Jr. told reporters that instead of selling the property at a big discount, the bank was now negotiating with some foreign investors on a joint-venture arrangement.

Property prices in the country, like elsewhere in the Asian region, have nosedived since the regional currency turmoil of 1997. From an all-time high price of P460,000/sq.m. when it was bought by Jacinto in 1996, the fair market value of the Buendia property has slid to P250,000/sq.m.

The plan is to develop the idle property, currently used as a parking lot, into a mixed-use commercial complex, with residential, office and hotel components like the Lopezes' Rockwell development.

"There's a big market because all buildings along that stretch in Buendia are old and there's not enough parking space," Cadiz said.

At present, PNB generates P700,000 to P800,000 by renting out the property for parking space.

Cadiz said the bank was looking at tying up with foreign investors, noting there was no single local investor that would have excess funds to pursue this big development. He said the project would need an anchor investor.

He noted that high-rise developers Ayala Land Inc. and Megaworld Corp. still had a lot of property in their inventory.

PNB said it would not shell out cash but instead contribute the property to the joint venture. The partners would likely take majority stake in the venture and pursue the development over the next five to seven years.

"It will be a combination of high-rise and medium-rise development," he said. "It will be a fully integrated, mixed-use development similar to Rockwell."

The property was taken back from Jacinto after he was unable to pay PNB for the funds he borrowed to buy the property.

Excluding the Buendia property, PNB plans to unload P20 billion worth of bad assets to a special purpose asset vehicle before the deadline to qualify for tax relief and other perks expires this September.

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ADB improves terms of currency swap deal

By Michelle V. Remo

THE ASIAN Development Bank has improved its proposed terms for the $200-million currency swap deal with the Philippine government.

The Department of Finance said discussions on the currency swap deal had moved forward after the ADB agreed to lower the price it offered.

The improvement in the offer came after the DOF gave a cold treatment to the proposed deal, whose original terms were considered prohibitive by the government.

"We are now studying ADB's new offer, and both sides have come to a better understanding of each other's position," Finance Undersecretary Eric Recto told reporters. He said the government is set to decide on the proposed currency swap deal within the week.

The facility, approved last January, seeks to provide long-term peso-denominated loans to selected banks for relending to businesses that are dependent on peso revenue.

It aims to help the end borrowers meet their long-term funding needs and boost their financial viability, without being burdened by currency and maturity mismatches.

The ADB will raise the funds for the facility through cross-currency swaps of convertible currency for pesos with the Philippine government.

While there was demand for the facility, negotiations on its terms were derailed by pricing issues. The government is asking the ADB to set the swap rates at below prevailing market rates.

Representatives from the ADB and the finance department met last week to give the proposed deal another shot.

During the meeting, finance officials told the ADB that the government could only afford the currency swap deal if the price would be lowered.

Although the DOF declined to disclose the original price offered by the ADB, sources said it was the same with the rates offered by commercial institutions.

Finance Secretary Juanita Amatong earlier said the ADB should offer a discounted price, otherwise the deal would defeat its purpose of supporting the Philippine government.

Another high-ranking official earlier said the government was looking at a price about 200 basis points lower than commercial rates.

Amatong said that with the ADB's triple A credit rating, it could afford to give the Philippines lower swap rates.

"It (ADB) should pass on the benefit of its credit rating to countries like us," she said.

Tsuneishi investing P2B to expand Cebu facility

By Clarissa S. Batino

JAPANESE ship builder Tsuneishi Heavy Industries Inc. is investing P2 billion to expand its facilities in Cebu starting this year.

The project will double the company's capacity and enable it to build bigger vessels.

Cebu-based Tsuneishi is 20 percent owned by Aboitiz Co. The company seeks to collect some P120 million in obligations of Negros Navigation Co.

Tsuneishi spokesperson Lelani Echavez said the Japanese stockholders of the company infused the investment starting this year. The expansion project will enable Tsuneishi to build 14 ships a year, from only seven. It will also increase employment in the Cebu plant to 3,000, from only 1,000.

"The expansion would also allow the company to build the so-called Panamax ships. These are huge bulk carriers that can pass through the Suez canal. These vessels are considered a crowning glory of ship builders," said Echavez.

Tsuneishi has been operating for more than 10 years in the country and about 100 years in Japan. It invested $110 million in Cebu when it started operations there.

The company, according to Echavez, has been been providing repair and dry docking services to Nenaco since 1999.

It is currently entangled in a collection row with Nenaco.

"In the beginning, Nenaco was a good customer. It was paying for the services it was buying. But later on, it started disappearing despite repeated efforts from Tsuneishi to collect," said the spokesperson.

Echavez said Tsuneishi was left with no other choice but to ask a Cebu court to attach Nenaco's vessels and garnish its bank accounts when the obligations remained unpaid.

Nenaco, for its part, had accused Tsuneishi of discrediting its reputation, stalling its talks with a prospective investor and eventually forcing it to ask the court for suspension of payment for its debts worth P2.4 billion.

Nenaco is 97.4-percent owned by Metro Pacific, a subsidiary of Hong Kong-based First Pacific Co. Ltd.

To set the records straight with regard to the news item entitled "High court junks complaint against BSP officials" which appeared last Monday, April 19, 2004 at the Philippine Daily Inquirer page B-3, and the news item entitled "Supreme Court junks rural bank complaint against BSP execs" which appeared also on April 19, 2004 at The Manila Times page B-3, and in the interest of fair play, the following factual narration is hereby published by Hilario Soriano, former President of the Rural Bank of San Miguel (Bulacan), Inc.

Supreme Court reverses decision against Bangko Sentral officials

In a Resolution dated February 27, 2004, penned by Supreme Court Associate Justice Dante O. Tinga (Associate Justice Reynato S. Puno, Chairman, on leave), the Supreme Court Second Division reversed its Decision dated March 14, 2003 by dismissing the administrative complaint filed by the Rural Bank of San Miguel, Inc. and exonerating BSP Deputy Governor Alberto V. Reyes, Director Wilfredo B. Domo-Ong, and Bank Examiner Herminio Principio from administrative liability.

Said Resolution stemmed from an administrative complaint originally filed with the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) through the BSP Governor on May 19, 1999 by Rural Bank of San Miguel (RBSM) President Hilario Soriano assisted by his counsel Atty. Rene Saguisag. In said complaint, BSP Deputy Governor Alberto V. Reyes, Director Wilfredo B. Domo-Ong, and Bank Examiner Herminio Principio were charged with unprofessionalism in violation of Republic Act No. 3019 (Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act) and Republic Act No. 6713, otherwise known as the Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards for Public Officials and Employees for illegal brokering and leakage of confidential information, among others.

Eight (8) months after the filing of the administrative complaint, the RBSM bank was ordered closed by the Monetary Board on January 21, 2000. One month later, the BSP through the Monetary Board dismissed said administrative complaint under Resolution No. 257 dated February 18, 2000. Mr. Soriano's motion for reconsideration was later denied by the Monetary Board, which denial was elevated to the Court of Appeals through a petition for review under Rule 43 of the 1997 Rules of Civil Procedure.

In a Decision dated December 14, 2001, the Honorable Court of Appeals through Presiding Justice Cancio Garcia reversed the ruling of the Monetary Board as follows:

"WHEREFORE, the instant petition is hereby GRANTED. Accordingly, Resolution No. 257 dated February 18, 2000 and letter dated July 31, 2000 of the respondent Monetary Board are hereby REVERSED and SET ASIDE and a new one entered finding respondents BSP Deputy Governor Alberto V. Reyes, Director Wilfredo B. Domo-ong of the BSP Department of Rural Bank, and bank examiner Herminio C Principio, administratively liable for unprofessionalism and are each meted the penalty of fine equivalent to six (6) months salary."

In said Decision, the Court of Appeals said *"Principio's unusual hurry in submitting his report cannot but be a part of the orchestrated scheme by the respondent BSP officials to apply pressure on RBSMI to sell itself out by subjecting it to many impositions through the Monetary Board."*

In finding Deputy Governor Alberto V. Reyes administratively liable, the Court of Appeals further stated that - *"Nor it is correct to say that respondent Alberto V. Reyes did no brokering simply because he was not paid for his efforts. As rightly argued by petitioner, there is no law which defines brokering in terms of payment therefor. To our mind, it suffices that respondent Reyes introduced and brought the parties together to try to hammer out a sale of RBSMI. After all, a broker's duty is mainly to bring the prospective buyers and sellers together."*

In finding Reyes and Domo-Ong guilty of violating Section 7 of Rep. Act No. 6713, the Court of Appeals said *"It likewise appears clear to Us that the training materials which were distributed to and utilized by all participants in a BSP seminar for bank examiners had not only served to disclose RBSMI's financial condition but had obviously made RBSMI a laughing stock. Albeit RBSMI was not specifically mentioned in those materials, yet the words used therein, i.e., "MRS. ONA I. ROS" and "RURAL BANK OF BARANGAY GINEBRA", are easily associated with petitioner Rural Bank of San Miguel and had thereby clearly betrayed the malice and bad faith of respondents Reyes and Domo-ong. Against a backdrop of leakage of newspaper publication concerning the distressed financial condition and business of RBSMI, the derision against RBSMI in the seminar materials is truly an additional pound of salt to RBSMI's already wounded reputation, an act no less violative of Secion 7 of Rep. Act no. 6713."*

Twin motions for reconsideration were filed by private respondents BSP Deputy Governor Alberto V. Reyes, Director Wilfredo B. Domo-Ong, and Bank Examiner Herminio Principio and public respondents Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas and Members of the Monetary Board but were denied with finality by the Court of Appeals in its Resolution dated July 29, 2002.

In said Resolution the Court of Appeals said *"The function of a court reviewing an administrative adjudication is to determine whether the correct rule of law was applied to the findings of facts of the administrative agency and whether there is substantial evidence to support such findings. Performing such function, this Court is of the opinion, after a second hard look of the facts admitted no less by respondent Reyes, that the latter's acts indeed constituted brokering."*

Private respondents BSP Deputy Governor Alberto V. Reyes, Director Wilfredo B. Domo-Ong, and Bank Examiner Herminio Principio filed a petition with the Supreme Court appealing the final decision of the Court of Appeals which was docketed as G.R. No. 154499.

Public respondents Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) and Members of the Monetary Board on the other hand filed separately another petition with the Supreme Court which was docketed as G.R. No. 154356.

The petition filed by public respondents BSP and the Members of the Monetary Board which is being questioned for forum-shopping is currently pending before the Supreme Court.

On March 14, 2003, the petition filed by private respondents BSP Deputy Governor Alberto V. Reyes, Director Wilfredo B. Domo-Ong, and Bank Examiner Herminio Principio (G.R. No. 154499), was decided by the Honorable Supreme Court in a Decision penned by Justice Vicente Mendoza which affirmed the Decision of the Honorable Court of Appeals finding Deputy Governor Alberto Reyes and Director Wilfredo Domo-ong administratively liable, although it reduced the fines imposed on them which states

"WHEREFORE, the decision of the Court of Appeals dated December 14, 2001 is AFFIRMED with MODIFICATIONS. Petitioner Alberto V. Reyes is ordered to pay a fine equivalent to two (2) months salary, while petitioner Wilfredo B. Domo-ong is fined in an amount equivalent to one (1) month salary. Petitioner Herminio C. Principio is found not administratively liable "

On the charge that Deputy Governor Reyes was brokering the sale of RBSMI, the Supreme Court Second Division concurred with the ruling of the Court of Appeals saying *"We agree with the foregoing ruling of the Court of Appeals In introducing Soriano to the presidents of TA Bank and Export and Industry Bank (EIB), petitioner Reyes was clearly not acting in his official capacity. It is enough that he brought the parties together to discuss the possibility of a sale in order for him to be found guilty of brokering. Petitioner Reyes did not have to be paid for what he did in order to be considered to have committed, a breach of the requirement of propriety expected of a BSP official. The circulars presented by Reyes indicate that it is indeed BSP's policy to promote mergers and consolidations by providing incentives for banks who would undergo such corporate combinations. But nowhere in these circulars is it stated that BSP officials should take an active role in bringing parties together for the possibility of a buy-in or sell-out."*

A motion for reconsideration was filed by BSP Deputy Governor Alberto Reyes and Director Wilfredo Domo-ong anchored on the following grounds: (1) it was not under their auspices that the seminar which used training materials containing two case studies on RBSMI's financial distress was conducted but under that of another department and other officials of BSP; and (2) they did not do any act which constituted "brokering" of the sale of RBSMI or deviated from the standards of professionalism.

On February 27, 2004 the Supreme Court Second Division issued a Resolution exonerating Deputy Governor Alberto Reyes from administrative liability. The High Court said that - *"the word 'brokering' clearly indicates the performance of certain acts for monetary consideration or compensation... From the evidence, all that Reyes did was to introduce RBSMI's President to the President of TA Bank and EIB. Nothing more. There was not even a hint that he was motivated by monetary consideration or swayed by any personal interest in doing what he did."*

In exonerating respondents Reyes and Domo-ong from administrative liability for the seminar which used RBSM bank as a case study, (Mrs. Ona I. Ros is Soriano in reverse) the Supreme Court cited the case of Arias v. Sandiganbayan which states that *"all heads of offices have to rely to a reasonable extent on the good faith of their subordinates. The case specifically involved the liability of the head of office in the preparation of bids, purchase of supplies and contract negotiations done by his subordinates. In the same fashion, petitioners in this case owing to their high ranks cannot be expected to acquaint themselves with such minutiae as the flow of files and documents which leave their desks. Myriad details such as those are, by office practice, left to subalterns and minor employees. Delegation of function is part of sound management."*

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The wage dilemma

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Cielito F. Habito

IT WAS just a matter of time. With the combined effects of the depreciation of the peso over the past year (notwithstanding the improvement in the past week), the recent re-imposition of higher import tariffs, and increases in oil prices and transport fares, the clamor for a new round of minimum wage increases was to be anticipated. Militant labor leaders are once again singing the familiar refrain that hits a crescendo every time Labor Day is approaching. This year, though, the cries appear louder than last year's, and seemingly for good reason.

So far, conditions do not appear to warrant a major hike in workers' wages, as the cost of living, as indicated by the overall inflation rate, had not gone up as fast as in years past. Inflation rate over the past two years had held steady at 3.1 percent, and the uptick to 3.4 percent since the start of this year has so far not been dramatic. But there is good reason to expect further acceleration in the general price level for the remainder of the year, and that is what organized labor probably has in mind in asking for a new round of wage increases.

Second best

From the employers' viewpoint, the ideal labor market would have all wages determined at the firm level according to individual firms' requirements and ability to pay. From organized labor's viewpoint, they usually prefer to see nationwide uniform wage hikes mandated by Congress. From a free-market economist's viewpoint, wages should be determined by supply and demand, so that there will be no excess demand or supply in the labor market, and all workers will be fully employed—although at wages likely to be uncomfortably low in a labor-abundant economy such as the Philippines.

Our current labor laws provide a compromise, "second-best" wage setting mechanism that seeks a middle ground among these "ideal" mechanisms seen from different perspectives. Every region of the country has a Tripartite Wage Board composed of two representatives each from labor, employers and government. Officials from the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) and the National Economic and Development Authority make up the government representatives. The mechanism is premised on each region having differing labor market circumstances. Thus, through a decentralized (down to regional level) wage-setting mechanism, minimum wages can vary among regions and be responsive to peculiar circumstances that may warrant a region's wage rates to be lower or higher than in other regions.

Who benefit?

Mandated minimum wage hikes, whether uniform nationwide or determined through the regional tripartite wage boards, actually have limited benefits for workers. People either forget or don't realize that not all workers in the country are wage workers. The January 2004 labor survey placed wage and salary workers at 16.7 million, which is just slightly over one-half (53 percent) of the total employed workers. The other half are made up of "own-account" or self-employed workers (11.7 million or 37 percent) and unpaid family workers (3.1 million or 10 percent). Considering that minimum wage earners make up only a fraction of all wage and salary workers, this means that a mandated increase in the minimum wage will actually benefit less than half of all employed workers.

On the other hand, the law of supply and demand tells us that when the wage is set higher than the market-clearing rate, there will be an excess supply of workers, or higher unemployment. Some workers already employed are likely to lose their jobs because their employers can no longer afford them, while workers who are unemployed to start with are even less likely to find a job. Either way, poverty rises as joblessness rises. On one hand, it is only fair that workers receive higher wages when the cost of living rises. But on the other hand, more workers are likely to find themselves without any job, thereby swelling the ranks of the poor.

So should government policy favor the workers who are already employed (and only less than half of them at that), or those who are unable to find a job or who lose their job as a result of a wage hike? How does the government help those workers who are self-employed or are unpaid family workers? This is the constant dilemma faced by government when beset by wage hike demands from the labor sector.

Helping all workers

Given the situation in our labor markets, helping our workers cope with the rising cost of living would entail more than simply mandating wage increases. The government needs to employ instruments of more universal benefit to all workers, be they wage workers, self-employed or unpaid family workers. Improved delivery of and access to basic services, especially health and education, would go a much longer way than a mandated P30 wage increase that only a few million workers will enjoy. Lower prices for basic commodities like rice, via public investments in improved farm productivity and more efficient marketing systems, would have the same effect as a wage increase, only with even wider benefit. All these require greater revenues to support such measures that entail increased public expenditures. But between forcing employers to pay higher wages and asking them to pay taxes more faithfully, I suspect they would prefer the latter—provided the government does a good job turning those taxes into public services.

(Comments welcome at chabito@ateneo.edu)

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Smart seeking gov't agency to issue gov't-guaranteed bonds

By Clarissa S. Batino

SMART Communications Inc. is scouting for a government agency that can issue 12-year sovereign-guaranteed dollar bonds.

The mobile phone firm will purchase $65 million worth of these bonds maturing in 2016 and use them to buy some of the debts of affiliate Pilipino Telephone Corp.

A banking source said that Philippine Export-Import Credit Agency or PhilEXIM (formerly Trade and Investment Development Corp.) was one of the government entities being considered by Smart and its parent firm, Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co., to do the bond issue.

"The PLDT group is either looking for a government issuer or bonds that have been previously issued that would conform with the characteristics it had set. There are talks that PLDT is planning to ask PhilEXIM to issue the bonds," said another banker.

Creditors were given until April 30 to consider exchanging a combined P20.5 billion of their exposure from Piltel to Smart.

Based on the term sheet Smart gave to creditors last month, the mobile phone company has yet to buy the 12-year bonds backed by an ROP (Republic of the Philippines) guarantee that it planned to exchange with Piltel obligations.

Interested in swapping their Piltel exposure with ROP bonds were Land Bank of the Philippines and Metropolitan Bank and Trust Co., according to banking sources.

In the term sheet, Smart merely indicated the features of the bond such as the maturity date of June 2016 and an interest rate of 2 percent a year.

A banker pointed out that prevailing yield on 10-year dollar debt papers was at 8.5 percent. At a 2-percent interest rate, Smart stood to earn the remaining 6.5 percent yearly.

"As of the date of this invitation, Smart cannot provide any assurance that it will be in a position to subscribe for securities which conform to the characteristics described above. Smart will only be in a position to formally approach issuers and the Republic after the offer date," said the phone firm in its offer sheet to creditors.

"Smart will, as soon as practicable following the offer date, approach prospective issuers and the Republic with a view to confirming the issue and terms of the ROP bonds," it added.

Thus, the cellular firm told creditors to indicate a second choice in the menu of options it had put on the table in the event that it could not source the bonds.

Other options included cash settlement at a discount, conversion to Smart's medium-term dollar loans at a discount, or exchange into a 10-year debt of Smart.

A successful debt conversion would allow Smart to acquire PLDT's 45-percent stake in Piltel.

An official from one of Piltel's biggest creditors said the debt-swap options offered by Smart would entail losses especially for banks that have not fully provided for the soured Piltel loans in their books.

"Even the ROP-guaranteed bonds which were initially attractive ended up to be just like the other offers which would give creditors a big haircut. Imagine, a 2 percent a year compared to the going yield of 8.5 percent," commented a private banker.

The cash-rich subsidiary of PLDT said it would only proceed with the debt conversion if 75 percent of the creditors would agree to any of the options offered.

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Celebrity Sports	170,000	-
Club Filipino	-	120,000
Eagleridge A/B*/C**	300,000*	-
Eastridge A/B*	-	70,000/90,000*
Forest Hills A/C*	180,000/250,000*	-
Manila Golf Ind/Corp.*	-	9,500,000
Manila Polo	-	2,250,000
Makati Sports Club	200,000	Pls. Call
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Riviera Golf A/B*/C**	120,000/160,000*/180,000**	-
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Royale Tagaytay CC	Pls. Call	-
Spa & Lodge	700,000	500,000
Sta. Elena A/B*	-	1,200,000/1,250,000*
Tagaytay Country Club	-	300,000
Tagaytay Highlands Golf	810,000	-
The Country Club	2,000,000	-
Valley Golf & CC	280,000	-
Valle Verde Ind	150,000	-
Wack Wack Golf	6,700,000	6,400,000

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Eagleridge "A"	-	270,000
Eastridge "A"	-	100,00
Evercrest "Indv."	-	70,000
Fairways & Blue Water "B1"	-	200,000
Fairways & Blue Water "C1"	-	320,000
Fontana "A"	-	150,000
Fontana "D"	-	70,000
Forest Hills "A"	130,000	170,000
Forest Hills "B"	170,000	210,000
Manila Polo	2,200,000	-
Makati Sports Club "A"	-	250,00
Orchard "A"	-	175,000
Punta Fuego	480,000	-
Riviera "C"	-	180,000
Rockwell Club		320,000
Royale Tagaytay	-	70,000
Sherwoods "A"	-	100,000
Sta. Elena "A"	1,150,000	-
Tagaytay Midlands	-	700,000
Tagaytay Country Club	310,000	-
Valle Verde "Corp"	-	280,000
Wack Wack Golf Club	6,400,000	-

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Baguio Country Club	600,000	650,000
Camp John Hay	-	250,000
Canlubang	-	500,000
Capitol Hills	135,000	170,000
Cebu Country Club	1,100,000	Please Call
Celebrity Sports Club	-	170,000
Club Filipino	100,000	170,000
Eagleridge "A"	220,000	270,000
Eagleridge "B"	280,000	350,000
Eagleridge "C"	-	350,000
Forest Hills "A"	-	180,000
Forest Hills "B"	200,000	220,000
Forest Hills "C"	-	250,000
Makati Sports Club "A"	180,000	240,000
Makati Sports Club "B"	-	250,000
Manila Golf (Corporate)	10,500,000	-
Manila Golf (Individual)	9,500,000	10,400,000
Manila Polo	Please Call	2,400,000
Manila Southwoods "A"	350,000	400,000
Manila Southwoods "B"	500,000	600,000
Manila Yacht Club	-	400,000
Metroclub "A"	110,000	-
Mimosa (Corporate)	250,000	275,000
Mt. Malarayat Gold "A"	150,000	Please Call
Mt. Malarayat Gold "C"	-	350,000
Orchard Golf Club "A"	170,000	200,000
Orchard Golf Club "B"	240,000	275,000
Orchard Golf Club "C"	-	330,000
Riviera Golf Club "A"	-	90,000
Riviera Golf Club "B"	-	110,000
Riviera Golf Club "C"	-	125,000
Sherwood Hills "A"	-	70,000
Sherwood Hills "C"	-	180,000
Rockwell	-	380,000
Spa & Lodge	550,000	600,000
Sta. Elena "A"	1,150,000	1,400,000
Sta. Elena "B"	1,400,000	1,700,000
Subic Bay Yacht (Corporate)	-	180,000
Subic Bay Yacht (Individual)	-	120,000
Tagaytay Country Club	310,000	350,000
Tagaytay Highlands	750,000	850,000
Tagaytay Midlands	650,000	700,000
Valle Verde (Individual)	100,000	150,000
Valley Golf	230,000	300,000
Wack-Wack Golf Club	6,500,000	6,700,000

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SM group considers unit to manage China investments

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

THE SY Group, which controls the biggest mall chain in the country, is considering setting up a subsidiary to manage its property investments in China, a member of the family told the INQUIRER.

SM Prime Holdings Inc. executive vice president Henry Sy Jr. said the group "might create an international division" or effectively set up a subsidiary for its investments in China since his father, mall builder Henry Sy Sr., owns several pieces of property in that country.

The plan, still at its very early stages, fits into the group's aggressive expansion targets in the next few years.

He said that with SM Prime's 17 super malls and its strategy to build at least two new malls every year, there may not be enough prime property to develop in the Philippines in the next seven to eight years.

SM Prime officials earlier said they were quite bullish on prospects for the property market in Southeast Asia and China as the mall operator studied possible expansion outside the country.

SM Prime president Hans Sy had said the group would study possible expansion in the region after "a few more years."

"It's a very new market over there. Anything can (happen). We really need time to study (the international property market). It's a very different market in Southeast Asia," Sy said in a recent stockholders' meeting.

He also said that SM Prime was still studying the possibility of folding in privately owned super malls that operate in Xiamen China into SM Prime, the holding company of the highly profitable SM retail group. The Sy group has a majority stake in the joint-venture company that runs two SM City malls in Xiamen.

Sy clarified that they did not operate the malls but handle instead technology transfer and training of personnel for these malls.

"Every partnership is being able to understand the culture. That's one area we are looking into and firm direction on whether it is part of SM Prime. The market may be big but competition is tough," he said of factors that may affect the group's decision.

In a related development, residential property developer SM Development Corp. named Henry Sy Jr. as its new vice chair.

The 50-year old Sy hails from De La Salle University, finishing business administration. The SMDC board created the position of vice chair, which will take over the chief executive officer functions in the company. The CEO oversees the daily operations and handles planning strategies for the company together with the president and chief operating officer.

His father continues to be SMDC's chair but has transferred the chief executive officer to the new vice chair position. He is also still active in drafting the policy direction for SMDC.

Backing up the group's expansion program were solid earnings targets for this year. SM Prime estimated it may earn P6 billion before income taxes, depreciation and appreciation this year compared with an Ebitda of P5.5 billion last year. In terms of net income, SM Prime reported an 8-percent growth to P4.18 billion from P3.86 billion the previous year.

Taipan plans hike in Chinabank stake

THE GROUP of retail tycoon Henry Sy is considering increasing its 42-percent stake in universal bank China Banking Corp., bank director Henry Sy Jr. said.

He told reporters that the Sy family might increase its stake in the bank as it had gradually done the past 20 years.

The family is represented in the bank by sons of the taipan—Hans as vice chair, and brothers Henry Jr., Herbert and Harley as board directors.

Based on documents of beneficial ownership submitted by the bank to the Philippine Stock Exchange, their father Henry Sr. through direct and indirect stakes control 30.8 percent in the bank as of March, equivalent to 9.38 million shares of the bank's 30.45 million issued and outstanding shares.

"We are officially (around) 42 percent, we will be increasing our stake here. As long as there are shares available at a price commensurate to the selling price, or to the value in the company, it is a good investment," Sy said.

He also said that it would make sense to merge another Sy-led bank, Banco de Oro Universal Bank, with Chinabank but there were no immediate plans as of this time.

He said there was "no serious urgency as of today" and that the possibility of a merger was still under careful study given the two banks' different corporate cultures.

A spokesperson for the Sy group said it made no sense to merge both Chinabank and Banco de Oro since both banks are doing well on their own.

"I am not a banking person but I will tell you my two cents worth. It makes sense to merge it because you can save on something but on the other hand these are banks of two different cultures too. They really have to study if it is to be a marriage made in heaven," Sy said.

He, however, declined to comment on reports that the Sy group bought additional Chinabank shares through foreign investment firms which transferred 2.5 million shares owned by Taiwan's International Commercial Bank of China (ICBC) in Chinabank to foreign funds Columbus Atlantic Fund and Symmetrix Capital Global.

The shares, which account for 8 percent of Chinabank, was bought for $29.5 million ($12 or about P660) a share.

Manila broker Lucky Securities Inc. transacted the deal in the stock market. The controversial shares were said to be wrestled from a planned additional buy-in by the Yuchengco group into Chinabank.

Elizabeth L. Sanchez

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Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	16.75	17.25	16.75	17	66,800
Bank of the Phil. Islands	46.5	47	46.5	47	835,800
China Banking Corp.	650	650	650	650	100
Citystate Savings Bank	16.25	16.25	16.25	16.25	2,500
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	40	41	40	41	72,700
Export and Ind. Bank Inc.	0.55	0.56	0.55	0.55	300,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	25	25.5	25	25	148,000
Philippine National Bank	23	23	23	23	15,700
Phil. Savings Bank	26.5	26.5	26.5	26.5	8,700
Union Bank of the Phil.	24.5	24.5	24	24	184,000
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
First Metro Invest. Corp.	200	210	200	210	410
Manulife Financial Corp.	2100	2120	2100	2120	610
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1.32	1.32	1.32	1.32	484,000
Sun Life Financial Inc.	1525	1525	1500	1500	900
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	23	23.75	23	23.75	51,300
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	0.67	0.69	0.67	0.69	2,840,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	910	955	910	955	112,050
Ipeople Inc.	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	15,000
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.04	0.041	0.04	0.04	3,100,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.035	0.036	0.035	0.036	5,300,000
Liberty Telecoms Holdings	0.145	0.145	0.145	0.145	50,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	1.76	1.78	1.76	1.78	8,903,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	1110	1160	1110	1150	211,930
Philweb Corp.	0.012	0.012	0.011	0.012	82,800,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	20	20	19.75	20	82,700
Manila Electric Co. B	31	31	30	30	2,113,800
Petron Corp.	3.25	3.35	3.25	3.35	7,299,000
Salcon Power Corp.	2.16	2.16	2.16	2.16	20,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.24	1.24	1.24	1.24	100,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	3	3	3	3	65,000
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Union Cement Corp.	1.68	1.68	1.68	1.68	5,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.15	3.2	3.15	3.2	100,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	28.5	28.5	28	28	4,800
Jollibee Foods Corp.	20.5	20.5	20	20.25	480,400
RFM Corp.	0.57	0.57	0.56	0.56	60,000
San Miguel Corp. A	59	59.5	59	59.5	231,500
San Miguel Corp. B	74.5	74.5	74	74.5	72,700
Universal Robina Corp.	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.5	20,000
Vitarich Corp.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	400,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Ayala Corp.	5.7	5.7	5.6	5.7	7,000,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	2.85	3.05	2.85	3.05	715,000
A. Soriano Corp.	1	1	1	1	10,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.48	1.48	1.48	1.48	20,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.58	0.59	0.57	0.58	10,360,000
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	500,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.13	0.145	0.13	0.145	480,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	0.24	0.27	0.24	0.27	1,020,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.022	0.026	0.022	0.023	2,700,000
Fil-Estate Corp.	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	30,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	0.98	0.98	0.98	0.98	300,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	27	27	25	25	6,253,000
Global Equities Inc.	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.06	400,000
Ionics Inc.	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	81,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	1.78	1.78	1.78	1.78	15,000
Macroasia Corp.	0.5	0.55	0.5	0.52	60,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.16	1.16	1.14	1.16	5,002,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	990,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.165	0.17	0.165	0.165	21,120,000
SPI Technologies Inc.	15	15	15	15	5,800
Unioil Res. & Holdings Co	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05	200,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.08	100,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.31	0.31	0.25	0.25	2,810,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.23	0.23	0.23	0.23	30,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Interphil Labs Inc. A	1.92	1.92	1.92	1.92	20,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	1.04	1.12	1.04	1.12	65,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.	0.53	0.53	0.53	0.53	100,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	430,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	23.5	24	23.5	24	673,200
PLDT (10% Pref) Series M	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	700
PLDT (10% Pref) Series T	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,000
PLDT (10% Pref.) Series U	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	900
PLDT (10% Pref) Series V	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,900
PLDT (10% Pref) Series W	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,200
PLDT (10% Pref) Series X	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Y	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	100
PLDT 10% Pref Series Aa	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	800
PLDT 10% Pref Series Bb	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	900
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	5.7	5.7	5.6	5.7	5,072,000
C & P Homes Inc.	0.13	0.16	0.13	0.16	1,750,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.125	0.125	0.125	0.125	100,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.215	0.23	0.215	0.225	5,930,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.06	1.06	1.06	1.06	7,542,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.17	130,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.23	0.25	0.23	0.25	2,810,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	1.78	1.8	1.78	1.8	19,000
SM Development Corp.	1.14	1.14	1.14	1.14	15,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	6	6.2	6	6.1	18,168,000
MINING					
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.0032	0.0032	0.0032	0.0032	3,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	1.18	1.2	1.18	1.2	110,000
Dizon Copper Silver Mines	1.14	1.14	1.14	1.14	5,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.2	0.21	0.2	0.21	250,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	0.35	0.35	0.34	0.35	220,000
OIL					
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.003	0.003	0.003	0.003	25,000,000

BCDA wants out . . .

From page B1

minutes compared to buses that take an average of 145 minutes to ply the same route.

Of the $503-million project cost, $421 million will be funded by the government of the People's Republic of China through the Export-Import Bank of China.

The Philippine government would shoulder the remaining $82 million as counterpart fund, which would already incorporate expenses for relocation of affected residents.

Cortes said the Northrail project is expect to be completed by 2007.

Buying momentum . . .

From page B1

6.1 percent to 1,589.40, its highest close since March 2001.

Joseph Roxas, president at Eagle Equities Inc., said the market may still have some sparks left depending on the performance of Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. (PLDT) on Wall Street.

He added, however, that market investors have started to discount a win by President Macapagal Arroyo in the presidential race based on latest surveys. He also said that rumors of a possible unrest on May 1 may weaken sentiment and provide an excuse for investors to exit the market while at these levels.

Vistan said the economy was improving as indicated by bets that most companies were going to report first-quarter earnings "that are at or above the market's expectations."

"Better-than-expected earnings have also helped limit the concern that higher borrowing costs would crimp future corporate profit growth," he said.

Among the companies that are expected to report strong results were PLDT, fast food king Jollibee Foods Corp. and Petron Corp.

PLDT is set to report its first-quarter results this May despite expectations it may report income at more than P4 billion, market sources said.

SMC recently reported its first quarter earnings grew 30 percent to P1.74 billion against the same period last year due to the growth in beer sales. SMC's combined domestic and international beer sales grew 25 percent.

Operating income increased to P3.43 billion or higher by 33 percent driven by domestic beverage operations. Operating income for SMC's domestic beer operations amounted to P2.17 billion or 32 percent above last year with volume growth growing 27 percent in the first quarter.

Early this week, the decision by US' pension fund California Public Employees Retirement System (CalPERS) to stay in the Philippines by giving it a grade slightly higher than the passing mark helped boost the local stock market yesterday but stock traders and fund managers said this was not really the big reason for the jump.

What really fueled the market's optimism, analysts said, was a stronger peso, a slowdown in government spending as mirrored by the March budget-deficit numbers and expectations of President Macapagal winning the May election.

Elizabeth L. Sanchez

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Smart seeking gov't agency to issue gov't-guaranteed bonds

By Clarissa S. Batino

SMART Communications Inc. is scouting for a government agency that can issue 12-year sovereign-guaranteed dollar bonds.

The mobile phone firm will purchase $65 million worth of these bonds maturing in 2016 and use them to buy some of the debts of affiliate Pilipino Telephone Corp.

A banking source said that Philippine Export-Import Credit Agency or PhilEXIM (formerly Trade and Investment Development Corp.) was one of the government entities being considered by Smart and its parent firm, Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co., to do the bond issue.

"The PLDT group is either looking for a government issuer or bonds that have been previously issued that would conform with the characteristics it had set. There are talks that PLDT is planning to ask PhilEXIM to issue the bonds," said another banker.

Creditors were given until April 30 to consider exchanging a combined P20.5 billion of their exposure from Piltel to Smart.

Based on the term sheet Smart gave to creditors last month, the mobile phone company has yet to buy the 12-year bonds backed by an ROP (Republic of the Philippines) guarantee that it planned to exchange with Piltel obligations.

Interested in swapping their Piltel exposure with ROP bonds were Land Bank of the Philippines and Metropolitan Bank and Trust Co., according to banking sources.

In the term sheet, Smart merely indicated the features of the bond such as the maturity date of June 2016 and an interest rate of 2 percent a year.

A banker pointed out that prevailing yield on 10-year dollar debt papers was at 8.5 percent. At a 2-percent interest rate, Smart stood to earn the remaining 6.5 percent yearly.

"As of the date of this invitation, Smart cannot provide any assurance that it will be in a position to subscribe for securities which conform to the characteristics described above. Smart will only be in a position to formally approach issuers and the Republic after the offer date," said the phone firm in its offer sheet to creditors.

"Smart will, as soon as practicable following the offer date, approach prospective issuers and the Republic with a view to confirming the issue and terms of the ROP bonds," it added.

Thus, the cellular firm told creditors to indicate a second choice in the menu of options it had put on the table in the event that it could not source the bonds.

Other options included cash settlement at a discount, conversion to Smart's medium-term dollar loans at a discount, or exchange into a 10-year debt of Smart.

A successful debt conversion would allow Smart to acquire PLDT's 45-percent stake in Piltel.

An official from one of Piltel's biggest creditors said the debt-swap options offered by Smart would entail losses especially for banks that have not fully provided for the soured Piltel loans in their books.

"Even the ROP-guaranteed bonds which were initially attractive ended up to be just like the other offers which would give creditors a big haircut. Imagine, a 2 percent a year compared to the going yield of 8.5 percent," commented a private banker.

The cash-rich subsidiary of PLDT said it would only proceed with the debt conversion if 75 percent of the creditors would agree to any of the options offered.

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MLA GOLF "IND".....Call now	MANILA POLO..........2.3M
MLA POLO..........2.45M	STA. ELENA "B"..........1.5M

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Canlubang Golf	430,000
Manila Southwoods A	420,000
Sherwood A	60,000

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Alta Vista	Pls. Call	-
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Camp John Hay	240,000	-
Capitol Hills	160,000	-
Celebrity Sports	170,000	-
Club Filipino	-	120,000
Eagleridge A/B'/C''	300,000'	-
Eastridge A/B'	-	70,000/90,000'
Forest Hills A/C'	180,000/250,000'	-
Manila Golf Ind/Corp.'	-	9,500,000
Manila Polo	-	2,250,000
Makati Sports Club	200,000	Pls. Call
Metropolitan Club A/B'	-	90,000/100,000'
Mimosa C2/C3'	220,000	280,000'
Mimosa Golf Ind	180,000	120,000
Riviera Golf A/B'/C''	120,000/160,000'/180,000''	-
Rockwell Leisure Club	270,000	-
Royale Tagaytay CC	Pls. Call	-
Spa & Lodge	700,000	500,000
Sta. Elena A/B'	-	1,200,000/1,250,000'
Tagaytay Country Club	-	300,000
Tagaytay Highlands Golf	810,000	-
The Country Club	2,000,000	-
Valley Golf & CC	280,000	-
Valle Verde Ind	150,000	-
Wack Wack Golf	[illegible]	6,400,000

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CLUB	BUYER	SELLER
Capitol Hills	-	180,000
Celebrity Sports Club	-	165,000
Eagleridge "A"	-	270,000
Eastridge "A"	-	100,00
Evercrest "Indv."	-	70,000
Fairways & Blue Water "B1"	-	200,000
Fairways & Blue Water "C1"	-	320,000
Fontana "A"	-	150,000
Fontana "D"	-	70,000
Forest Hills "A"	130,000	170,000
Forest Hills "B"	170,000	210,000
Manila Polo	2,200,000	-
Makati Sports Club "A"	-	250,00
Orchard "A"	-	175,000
Punta Fuego	480,000	-
Riviera "C"	-	180,000
Rockwell Club		320,000
Royale Tagaytay	-	70,000
Sherwoods "A"	-	100,000
Sta. Elena "A"	1,150,000	-
Tagaytay Midlands	-	700,000
Tagaytay Country Club	310,000	-
Valle Verde "Corp"	-	280,000
Wack Wack Golf Club	6,400,000	-

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CLUB	BUYER	SELLER
Alabang Country Club "A" (Filipino)	1,000,000	1,200,000
Alabang Country Club "B" (Foreigner)	-	1,300,000
Baguio Country Club	600,000	650,000
Camp John Hay	-	250,000
Canlubang	-	500,000
Capitol Hills	135,000	170,000
Cebu Country Club	1,100,000	Please Call
Celebrity Sports Club	-	170,000
Club Filipino	100,000	170,000
Eagleridge "A"	220,000	270,000
Eagleridge "B"	280,000	350,000
Eagleridge "C"	-	350,000
Forest Hills "A"		180,000
Forest Hills "B"	200,000	220,000
Forest Hills "C"	-	250,000
Makati Sports Club "A"	180,000	240,000
Makati Sports Club "B"		250,000
Manila Golf (Corporate)	10,500,000	-
Manila Golf (Individual)	9,500,000	10,400,000
Manila Polo	Please Call	2,400,000
Manila Southwoods "A"	350,000	400,000
Manila Southwoods "B"	500,000	600,000
Manila Yacht Club	-	400,000
Metroclub "A"	110,000	-
Mimosa (Corporate)	250,000	275,000
Mt. Malarayat Gold "A"	150,000	Please Call
Mt. Malarayat Gold "C"		350,000
Orchard Golf Club "A"	170,000	200,000
Orchard Golf Club "B"	240,000	275,000
Orchard Golf Club "C"	-	330,000
Riviera Golf Club "A"	-	90,000
Riviera Golf Club "B"	-	110,000
Riviera Golf Club "C"	-	125,000
Sherwood Hills "A"	-	70,000
Sherwood Hills "C"	-	180,000
Rockwell	-	380,000
Spa & Lodge	550,000	600,000
Sta. Elena "A"	1,150,000	1,400,000
Sta. Elena "B"	1,400,000	1,700,000
Subic Bay Yacht (Corporate)		180,000
Subic Bay Yacht (Individual)	-	120,000
Tagaytay Country Club	310,000	350,000
Tagaytay Highlands	750,000	850,000
Tagaytay Midlands	650,000	700,000
Valle Verde (Individual)	100,000	150,000
Valley Golf	230,000	300,000
Wack Wack Golf Club	6,500,000	6,700,000

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SM group considers unit to manage China investments

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

THE SY Group, which controls the biggest mall chain in the country, is considering setting up a subsidiary to manage its property investments in China, a member of the family told the INQUIRER.

SM Prime Holdings Inc. executive vice president Henry Sy Jr. said the group "might create an international division" or effectively set up a subsidiary for its investments in China since his father, mall builder Henry Sy Sr., owns several pieces of property in that country.

The plan, still at its very early stages, fits into the group's aggressive expansion targets in the next few years.

He said that with SM Prime's 17 super malls and its strategy to build at least two new malls every year, there may not be enough prime property to develop in the Philippines in the next seven to eight years.

SM Prime officials earlier said they were quite bullish on prospects for the property market in Southeast Asia and China as the mall operator studied possible expansion outside the country.

SM Prime president Hans Sy had said the group would study possible expansion in the region after "a few more years."

"It's a very new market over there. Anything can (happen). We really need time to study (the international property market). It's a very different market in Southeast Asia," Sy said in a recent stockholders' meeting.

He also said that SM Prime was still studying the possibility of folding in privately owned super malls that operate in Xiamen China into SM Prime, the holding company of the highly profitable SM retail group. The Sy group has a majority stake in the joint-venture company that runs two SM City malls in Xiamen.

Sy clarified that they did not operate the malls but handle instead technology transfer and training of personnel for these malls.

"Every partnership is being able to understand the culture. That's one area we are looking into and firm direction on whether it is part of SM Prime. The market may be big but competition is tough," he said of factors that may affect the group's decision.

In a related development, residential property developer SM Development Corp. named Henry Sy Jr. as its new vice chair.

The 50-year old Sy hails from De La Salle University, finishing business administration. The SMDC board created the position of vice chair, which will take over the chief executive officer functions in the company. The CEO oversees the daily operations and handles planning strategies for the company together with the president and chief operating officer.

His father continues to be SMDC's chair but has transferred the chief executive officer to the new vice chair position. He is also still active in drafting the policy direction for SMDC.

Backing up the group's expansion program were solid earnings targets for this year. SM Prime estimated it may earn P6 billion before income taxes, depreciation and appreciation this year compared with an Ebitda of P5.5 billion last year. In terms of net income, SM Prime reported an 8-percent growth to P4.18 billion from P3.86 billion the previous year.

Taipan plans hike in Chinabank stake

THE GROUP of retail tycoon Henry Sy is considering increasing its 42-percent stake in universal bank China Banking Corp., bank director Henry Sy Jr. said.

He told reporters that the Sy family might increase its stake in the bank as it had gradually done the past 20 years.

The family is represented in the bank by sons of the taipan—Hans as vice chair, and brothers Henry Jr., Herbert and Harley as board directors.

Based on documents of beneficial ownership submitted by the bank to the Philippine Stock Exchange, their father Henry Sr. through direct and indirect stakes control 30.8 percent in the bank as of March, equivalent to 9.38 million shares of the bank's 30.45 million issued and outstanding shares.

"We are officially (around) 42 percent, we will be increasing our stake here. As long as there are shares available at a price commensurate to the selling price, or to the value in the company, it is a good investment," Sy said.

He also said that it would make sense to merge another Sy-led bank, Banco de Oro Universal Bank, with Chinabank but there were no immediate plans as of this time.

He said there was "no serious urgency as of today" and that the possibility of a merger was still under careful study given the two banks' different corporate cultures.

A spokesperson for the Sy group said it made no sense to merge both Chinabank and Banco de Oro since both banks are doing well on their own.

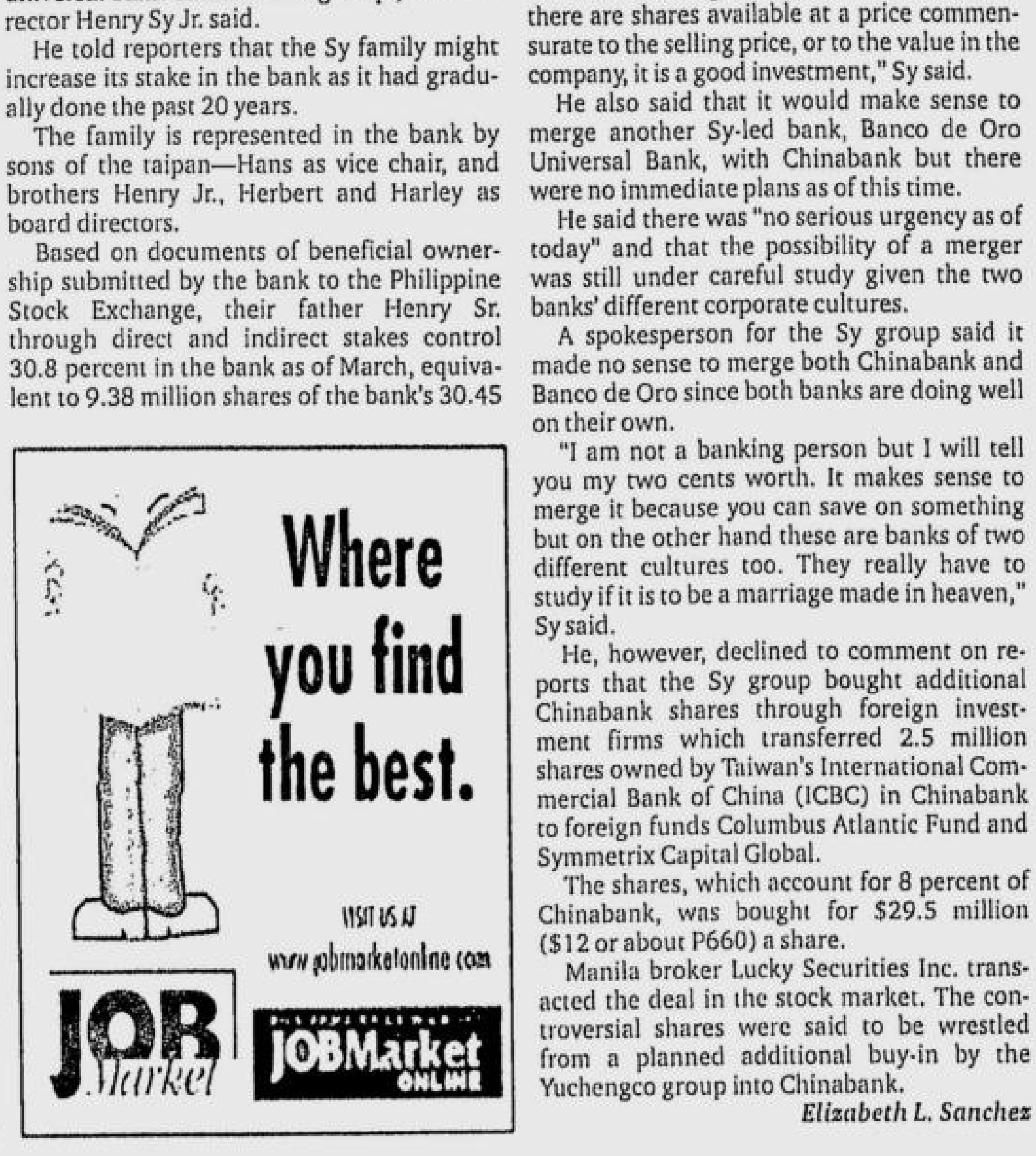
"I am not a banking person but I will tell you my two cents worth. It makes sense to merge it because you can save on something but on the other hand these are banks of two different cultures too. They really have to study if it is to be a marriage made in heaven," Sy said.

He, however, declined to comment on reports that the Sy group bought additional Chinabank shares through foreign investment firms which transferred 2.5 million shares owned by Taiwan's International Commercial Bank of China (ICBC) in Chinabank to foreign funds Columbus Atlantic Fund and Symmetrix Capital Global.

The shares, which account for 8 percent of Chinabank, was bought for $29.5 million ($12 or about P660) a share.

Manila broker Lucky Securities Inc. transacted the deal in the stock market. The controversial shares were said to be wrestled from a planned additional buy-in by the Yuchengco group into Chinabank.

Elizabeth L. Sanchez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PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of April 23, 2004)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.2	20,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	16.75	17.25	16.75	17	68,800
Bank of the Phil. Islands	46.5	47	45.5	47	835,800
China Banking Corp.	650	650	650	650	100
Citystate Savings Bank	16.25	16.25	16.25	16.25	2,500
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	40	41	40	41	72,700
Export and Ind. Bank Inc.	0.55	0.55	0.55	0.55	300,030
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	25	25.5	25	25	148,000
Philippine National Bank	23	23	23	23	15,700
Phil. Savings Bank	26.5	26.5	26.5	26.5	8,700
Union Bank of the Phil.	24.5	24.5	24	24	184,000
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
First Metro Invest. Corp.	200	210	200	210	410
Manulife Financial Corp.	2100	2120	2100	2120	610
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1.32	1.32	1.32	1.32	484,000
Sun Life Financial Inc.	1525	1525	1500	1500	900
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	23	23.75	23	23.75	51,300
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	0.67	0.69	0.67	0.69	2,640,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	910	955	910	955	112,050
Ipeople Inc.	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	15,000
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.04	0.041	0.04	0.04	3,100,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.035	0.036	0.035	0.036	5,300,000
Liberty Telecoms Holdings	0.145	0.145	0.145	0.145	50,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	1.76	1.78	1.76	1.78	8,903,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	1110	1160	1110	1150	211,930
Philweb Corp.	0.012	0.012	0.011	0.012	82,800,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	20	20	19.75	20	82,700
Manila Electric Co. B	31	31	30	30	2,113,800
Petron Corp.	3.25	3.35	3.25	3.35	7,299,000
Salcon Power Corp.	2.16	2.16	2.16	2.16	20,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.24	1.24	1.24	1.24	100,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	3	3	3	3	65,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	520,000
Union Cement Corp.	1.68	1.68	1.68	1.68	5,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.15	3.2	3.15	3.2	100,000
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Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.58	0.59	0.57	0.58	10,360,000
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	500,000
Crown Equities Inc	0.13	0.145	0.13	0.145	480,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	0.24	0.27	0.24	0.27	1,020,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.022	0.026	0.022	0.023	2,700,000
Fil-Estate Corp	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	30,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	0.98	0.98	0.98	0.98	300,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	27	27	25	25	6,253,000
Global Equities Inc.	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.06	400,000
Ionics Inc	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	81,000
J G Summit Holdings Inc.	1.78	1.78	1.78	1.78	15,000
Macroasia Corp.	0.5	0.55	0.5	0.52	60,000
Megaworld Corp	1.16	1.16	1.14	1.16	5,002,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	990,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.165	0.17	0.165	0.165	21,120,000
SPI Technologies Inc	15	15	15	15	5,800
Unioil Res. & Holdings Co	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05	200,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.08	100,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.31	0.31	0.25	0.25	2,810,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.23	0.23	0.23	0.23	30,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Interphil Labs Inc. A	1.92	1.92	1.92	1.92	20,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	1.04	1.12	1.04	1.12	65,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.	0.53	0.53	0.53	0.53	100,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc	0.28	0.28	0.26	0.26	430,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	23.5	24	23.5	24	673,200
PLDT (10% Pref) Series M	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	700
PLDT (10% Pref) Series T	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,000
PLDT (10% Pref.) Series U	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	900
PLDT (10% Pref) Series V	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,900
PLDT (10% Pref) Series W	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,200
PLDT (10% Pref) Series X	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Y	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	100
PLDT 10% Pref Series Aa	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	800
PLDT 10% Pref Series Bb	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	900
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	5.7	5.7	5.6	5.7	5,072,000
C & P Homes Inc	0.13	0.16	0.13	0.16	1,750,000
Cyber Bay Corp	0.125	0.125	0.125	0.125	100,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.215	0.23	0.215	0.225	5,930,000
Filinvest Land Inc	1.08	1.08	1.06	1.06	7,542,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.17	130,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.23	0.25	0.23	0.25	2,810,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	1.78	1.8	1.78	1.8	19,000
SM Development Corp.	1.14	1.14	1.14	1.14	15,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc	6	6.2	6	6.1	18,188,000
MINING					
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.0032	0.0032	0.0032	0.0032	3,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	1.18	1.2	1.18	1.2	110,000
Dizon Copper Silver Mines	1.14	1.14	1.14	1.14	5,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.2	0.21	0.2	0.21	250,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	0.35	0.35	0.34	0.35	220,000
OIL					
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.003	0.003	0.003	0.003	25,000,000

BCDA wants out . . .

From page B1

minutes compared to buses that take an average of 145 minutes to ply the same route.

Of the $503-million project cost, $421 million will be funded by the government of the People's Republic of China through the Export-Import Bank of China.

The Philippine government would shoulder the remaining $82 million as counterpart fund, which would already incorporate expenses for relocation of affected residents.

Cortes said the Northrail project is expect to be completed by 2007.

Buying momentum . . .

From page B1

6.1 percent to 1,589.40, its highest close since March 2001.

Joseph Roxas, president at Eagle Equities Inc., said the market may still have some sparks left depending on the performance of Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. (PLDT) on Wall Street.

He added, however, that market investors have started to discount a win by President Macapagal Arroyo in the presidential race based on latest surveys. He also said that rumors of a possible unrest on May 1 may weaken sentiment and provide an excuse for investors to exit the market while at these levels.

Vistan said the economy was improving as indicated by bets that most companies were going to report first-quarter earnings "that are at or above the market's expectations."

"Better-than-expected earnings have also helped limit the concern that higher borrowing costs would crimp future corporate profit growth," he said.

Among the companies that are expected to report strong results were PLDT, fast food king Jollibee Foods Corp. and Petron Corp.

PLDT is set to report its first-quarter results this May despite expectations it may report income at more than P4 billion, market sources said.

SMC recently reported its first quarter earnings grew 30 percent to P1.74 billion against the same period last year due to the growth in beer sales. SMC's combined domestic and international beer sales grew 25 percent.

Operating income increased to P3.43 billion or higher by 33 percent driven by domestic beverage operations. Operating income for SMC's domestic beer operations amounted to P2.17 billion or 32 percent above last year with volume growth growing 27 percent in the first quarter.

Early this week, the decision by US' pension fund California Public Employees Retirement System (CalPERS) to stay in the Philippines by giving it a grade slightly higher than the passing mark helped boost the local stock market yesterday but stock traders and fund managers said this was not really the big reason for the jump.

What really fueled the market's optimism, analysts said, was a stronger peso, a slowdown in government spending as mirrored by the March budget-deficit numbers and expectations of President Macapagal winning the May election. *Elizabeth L. Sanchez*

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Banks prepare for shift in accounting rules

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE BANGKO Sentral ng Pilipinas has asked banks to brace for a shift to a new accounting rule that will require them to book gains or losses from derivatives exposure by January this year.

In an interview, BSP Assistant Governor Nestor Espenilla said the central bank was moving to apply these international accounting rules (IAS-39), which prohibits the treatment of derivatives or hedging instruments as off-balance sheet items.

Under the present system, a derivative instrument whose value is based on the underlying value of a certain product or index, is recorded by local banks as a contingent item.

Under IAS 39, all financial assets and liabilities including derivatives will have to be recognized on the balance sheet starting January 2005. The derivatives will be placed under the held-for-trading category, which will be measured based on fair or theoretical value. Any market gain or loss will thus be immediately reflected in the income statement.

"It is the intention of the BSP to apply the IAS by the appointed time, but at present, there are still discussions at the international level on standard-setting," Espenilla said.

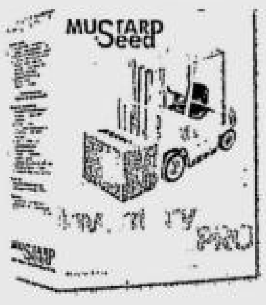
"Basically, what we've done is to signal to the banks that we're going to apply the IAS-39," he said.

As banks will have to start booking gains or losses from these instruments, there are concerns that those with huge exposure could experience volatile earnings once the shift to the new accounting standard was made.

The shift to IAS is seen as a major challenge as it will not only overhaul accounting practices but test the banks' risk management strategies as well.

"Banks have been preparing for that. It is not a surprise that we're heading towards this," he said.

Development Bank of the Philippines president Simon Paterno, who was previously managing director and country representative of US bank JP Morgan, said derivatives themselves would not necessarily cause earnings volatility.



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Inkote seeks 20% of coil coating mart

By Ronnel W. Domingo

INKOTE Philippines Inc., a leading firm in the local coatings and ink industry, announced last Friday that it was expanding its product lines to pre-painting supplies for steel coils through a partnership with Sweden's Becker Industrial Coatings AB.

Company president Benjamin C. del Rosario said in an interview that Inkote Philippines was aiming to corner about a fifth the local coil coating segment, which posts some P600 million in revenue each year.

Del Rosario explained that the industry segment entailed the pre-painting of steel coils before these are further processed into products such as steel roofing, appliances, wall and ceiling finishes as well as interior panels of buildings.

"Our affiliate, PT Inkote Indonesia, has cornered 80 percent of the Indonesian coil coatings market after seven years," the official said. "We want to do the same here."

He said that the company would initially aim for 20 percent of the local market, which could mean P120 million in additional revenue each year.

"We ensure that we can do this through our partnership with the Becker Group, which is the world leader in this industry," Del Rosario said.

Inkote Philippines is into supplying coatings for biscuit cans, tin cans for processed food like sardines, and crown and caps.

It also supplies printing inks for cans, crown and caps, corrugated carton boxes, cement paper bags and school and office supplies.

Swift readies chicken export to Japan

By Christine A. Gaylican

SWIFT Foods Inc., one of the country's major poultry producers, is set to export some 30-34 metric tons of processed chicken products to Japan over the next six months.

Swift president Bernardo Concepcion said in a statement that Swift would deliver the shipments to Japanese firms Sumikin Busan and Nissho Iwai.

"The company would be exporting chicken cut-ups used to prepare the popular Japanese chicken barbecue dish, the yakitori," Concepcion said.

He said that representatives of the two Japanese firms, together with their customers, recently visited Swift's new modern dressing facilities in Cagayan de Oro.

Swift's chicken dressing plant is capable of cleaning up to 8,000 birds per hour.

The processing facility, on the other hand, can produce value-added chicken products such as fillets and frozen cut-ups.

According to RFM chair Jose Concepcion Jr., it took some time to meet the product shipment requirements of the Japanese clients because of intensive labor requirements.

The elder Concepcion said in an earlier interview that although domestic prices are sometimes more attractive than the selling export price to Japan, Swift pushed through with the export as it allowed the company to meet international product standards.

"The Japanese are very specific with their orders. We have to be precise with the meat cuts," Concepcion Jr. said.

Swift and a number of local entrepreneurs invested over P500 million to expand operations in Northern Mindanao.

Swift's facilities are Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) certified and have a triple A accreditation from the National Meat Inspection Commission.

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Globe fulfills mission via employee volunteerism

By Cynthia H. Evidente

SOME kids try their hands on the computer donated to the Makaturing community by Globe and Innove under the Integrated Kalahi ng Ayala program.

PUTTING together the framework for its corporate social responsibility program, Globe Telecom is focusing on youth education and community involvement as the core of its efforts to impact on the society as a good corporate citizen.

Globe, having successfully established its mark as a major Philippine full-service telecommunications service provider, is now a major player and catalyst in digital cellular services with its Globe Handyphone GSM service, and in the wireline business, with its subsidiary Innove Communications' via Globequest and Globelines.

Beyond its business success lies its obligation to help in government poverty alleviation and other social impact projects.

"What has become apparent is that corporate citizenship should be interwoven in our daily operations. We need to get our organization involved in corporate social responsibility in our daily lives… in the various interactions that we have," says Globe president and CEO Gerardo C. Ablaza Jr.

CORPORATE CITIZEN

Key players

A look into Globe's track record in this field would show a story of a rich culture of strong CSR thrust of the management, backed by employee volunteerism involving 4,100 employees in its 80 corporate offices, business centers and technical offices in about 20 cities nationwide.

Globe empowers the entire organization to engage in programs where its people are key players in enhancing young people's lives through advanced educational programs, and in supporting communities through focused and sustained broad-based services.

Drawing strength not only from its own human and corporate resources, but also from acting in synergy with the Ayala group of companies and partner organizations from the private and public sectors, Globe is now in the midst of implementing a host of social impact programs.

It is deep into youth education via Globe EdTV, a flagship program to strengthen and advance teaching and learning instructions in 100 primary and secondary public schools.

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Educational gap

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Building dreams

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Some 20 Globe employees also put in their one-day "sweat equity" in reconstruction activities for two houses adopted by the company under the Habitat for Humanity program.

Parallel to this is Globe's flagship community relations project, involving medical missions and donations.

Since 1999, Globe has held 16 medical missions nationwide benefiting some 15,000 patients in communities where health and physical well-being are of paramount concern. In 2003 alone, some 3,160 individuals were served by medical missions.

(Ms Evidente is head of the PR division of Globe Telecom's corporate communications group)

SeeMall!

AYALA CINEMAS

ATC (ALABANG TOWN CENTER)	G1 (GLORIETTA 1)	G4 (GLORIETTA 4)	GB3 (GREENBELT 3)	ACC (AYALA CENTER CEBU)
1 HELLBOY	1 MASIKIP SA DIBDIB	1 HELLBOY	GUARANTEED SEATS 1 PAYCHECK 1:30 3:50 6:20 8:50 11:20	1 LOVE ACTUALLY
2 PETER PAN	2 HELLBOY	2 TAKING LIVES	GUARANTEED SEATS 2 HELLBOY 12:50 3:25 6:00 8:35 11:10	2 TAKING LIVES
3 PAYCHECK	3 PAYCHECK	GUARANTEED SEATS 3 PAYCHECK 12:30 [illegible] 5:30 8:00 10:30	GUARANTEED SEATS 3 PASSION OF THE CHRIST 12:50 3:15 5:40 8:05 10:30	3 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
4 SPARTAN	4 TWISTED	4 IMAGINING ARGENTINA	GUARANTEED SEATS 4 BIG FISH 12:50 3:30 6:10 8:50 11:30	4 GRUDGE 2
5 PASSION OF THE CHRIST		5 SPARTAN	GUARANTEED SEATS 5 TAKING LIVES 2:00 4:20 6:40 9:00 11:20	5 50 FIRST DATES
		6 PASSION OF THE CHRIST		
		7 BIG FISH		

GB1 (GREENBELT 1)
1 HELLBOY 11:55, 2:20, 4:45, 7:10, 9:35
2 TAKING LIVES 12:15, 2:35, 4:55, 7:15, 9:35

At the Activity Center

GLORIETTA	ALABANG TOWN CENTER	AYALA CENTER CEBU
PHILIPPINE FASHION WEEK April 21 to 30, 2004	AN AFFAIR TO REMEMBER (A Wedding & Debut Event Year 2) April 30 to May 2, 2004	NICKELODEON'S SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS: BIKINI BOTTOM BASH April 30 (11am, 4pm, 7pm) May 1 & 2 (11am, 3pm, 6pm)

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Globe
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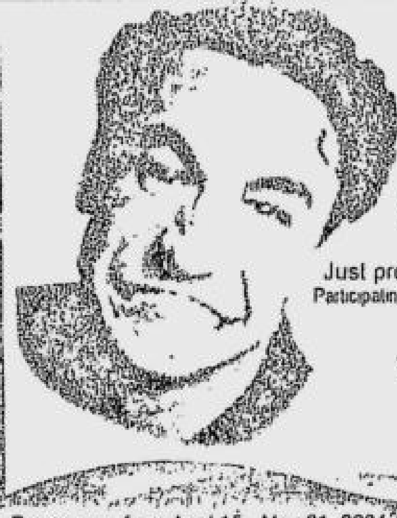
PG 13



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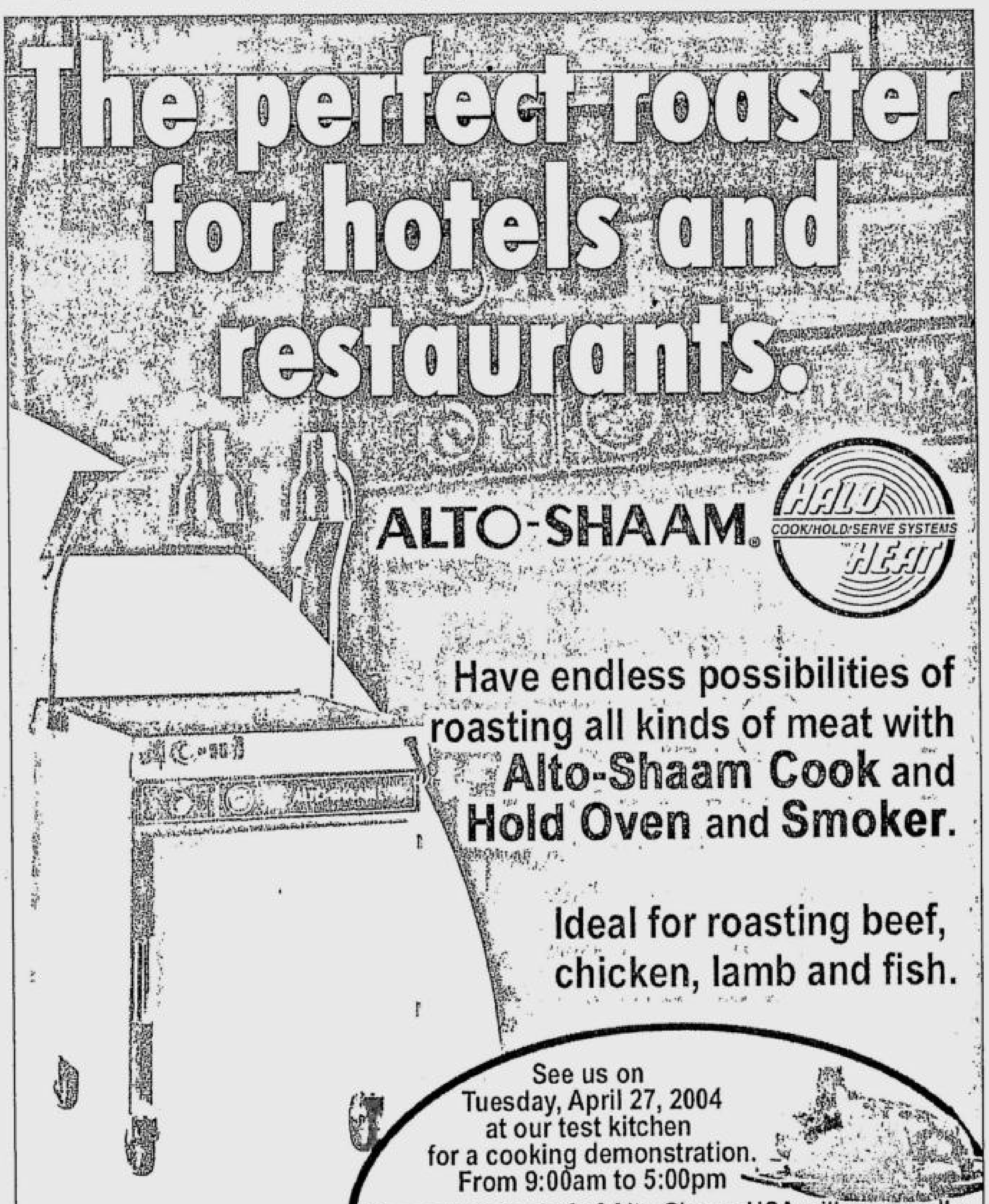

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Globe fulfills mission via employee volunteerism

By Cynthia H. Evidente

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Some 20 Globe employees also put in their one-day "sweat equity" in reconstruction activities for two houses adopted by the company under the Habitat for Humanity program.

Parallel to this is Globe's flagship community relations project, involving medical missions and donations.

Since 1999, Globe has held 16 medical missions nationwide benefiting some 15,000 patients in communities where health and physical well-being are of paramount concern. In 2003 alone, some [illegible],160 individuals were served by medical missions.

(Ms Evidente is head of the PR division of Globe Telecom's [illegible]orporate communications group)

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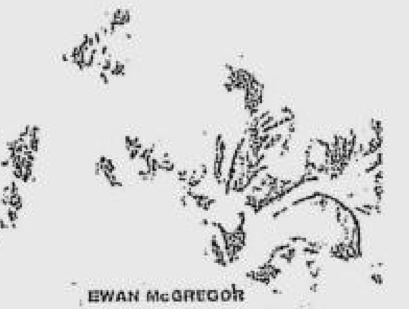

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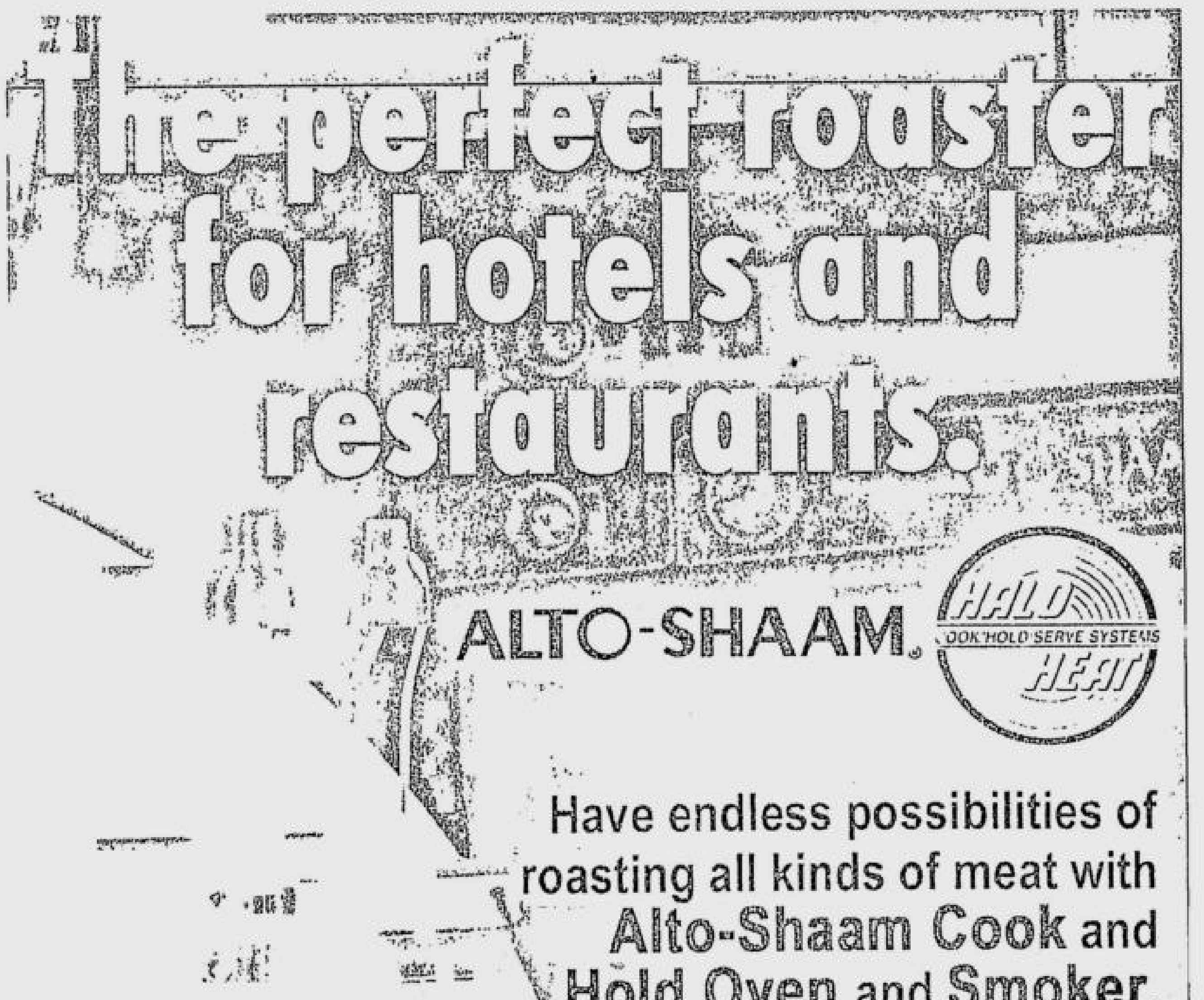

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MICROFINANCE INSTITUTIONS

Performance standards drawn up for small lenders

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE INTER-AGENCY National Credit Council has drawn up performance standards for all types of microfinance institutions (MFIs), or those lending to low-income sectors.

The common set of performance standards for all microfinance institutions—rural banks, credit cooperatives and microfinance non-government organizations—was developed to allow greater transparency in MFI operations.

"These standards will serve as the microfinance industry benchmark to allow the comparison of performance among all institutions engaged in the delivery of microfinancial services," according to NCC documents.

In measuring portfolio quality, the NCC standards set a limit of 5 percent for each MFI portfolio at risk (PAR), or the proportion of the microfinance loan portfolio with one day of missed payment to the total loans outstanding at any given time.

Since microfinance loans are small, from a low of P2,000 to a maximum of P500,000, the likelihood of default of the entire loan balançe is great when one amortization payment is missed.

The new framework also mapped out loan provisioning requirements based on the PAR:

- 1 percent provisioning for current loans;
- 2 percent for PAR 1 to 30 days;
- 20 percent for PAR 31 to 60 days and for loans restructured for the first time;
- 50 percent for PAR 61 to 90 days; and
- 100 percent for PAR 91 days and above and/or loans restructured twice.

For restructured loans that have not had three consecutive payments, the allowance shall be 20 percent or higher depending on the length of time not paid.

The framework also prescribed a standard of 10 percent for administrative efficiency, measured by dividing administrative costs by average gross loan portfolio.

Also, operational efficiency—measured by dividing income from operations by financing and administrative costs—should be greater than 120 percent.

Aside from portfolio quality and efficiency, the framework prescribed the standards for sustainability, outreach and savings generated per loan outstanding.

Usually, the processing of microfinance loans is fast and disbursement is timely. Extensive loan documentation to prove creditworthiness is not required.

The NCC technical working group is comprised of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, Department of Finance, Credit Policy Improvement Program, Land Bank of the Philippines, Philippine Deposit Insurance Corp., National Economic and Development Authority, Department of Labor and Employment, Development Bank of the Philippines, Microfinance Council of the Philippines, Department of Labor and Employment, National Confederation of Cooperatives and Rural Bankers Association of the Philippines.

Boracay's power needs seen to double

By Abigail L. Ho

BORACAY, Aklan—With eight large resorts currently being built here, power demand is expected to double within six months to a year from the present six megawatts (MW).

"Power demand can grow by as large as four to six MW within the next six months to one year," said Erico Bucoy, Aklan Electric Cooperative Inc. (Akelco) general manager.

Akelco distributes power to the island of Boracay and the whole of Aklan province.

Apart from electricity being distributed by Akelco, several resort owners here are also using power generators to ensure steady and reliable supply of power.

Bucoy said that one of the resorts now under construction here is the 110-room Regency Hotel. They expect the hotel to cause a spike in power demand upon completion.

To meet this demand, Mirant Global Philippines Corp.—a consortium composed of independent power producer Mirant Philippines Corp. and Metrobank subsidiary Global Business Holdings Inc.—is currently putting up two new plants in Aklan.

Once the 7.5-MW Nabas and 5-MW New Washington diesel plants are completed, Mirant Global will operate the facilities under a 20-year build-own-operate agreement with Akelco.

The operation of the new plants, to be commissioned in the third quarter, will also reduce electricity costs of most Boracay resort owners.

Bucoy said power costs could go down to as low as P5-P7 per kWh from the current P12-P15 per kWh.

According to Bucoy, Akelco is also thinking of applying for a two-tiered tariff scheme with the Energy Regulatory Commission to set different rates for commercial and residential consumers.

The scheme would allow Akelco to charge commercial establishments P1-P1.50 more per kWh, he said.

"Establishments ... such as five-star resorts, which consume much more power, have to be willing to pay more than residential consumers," he said.

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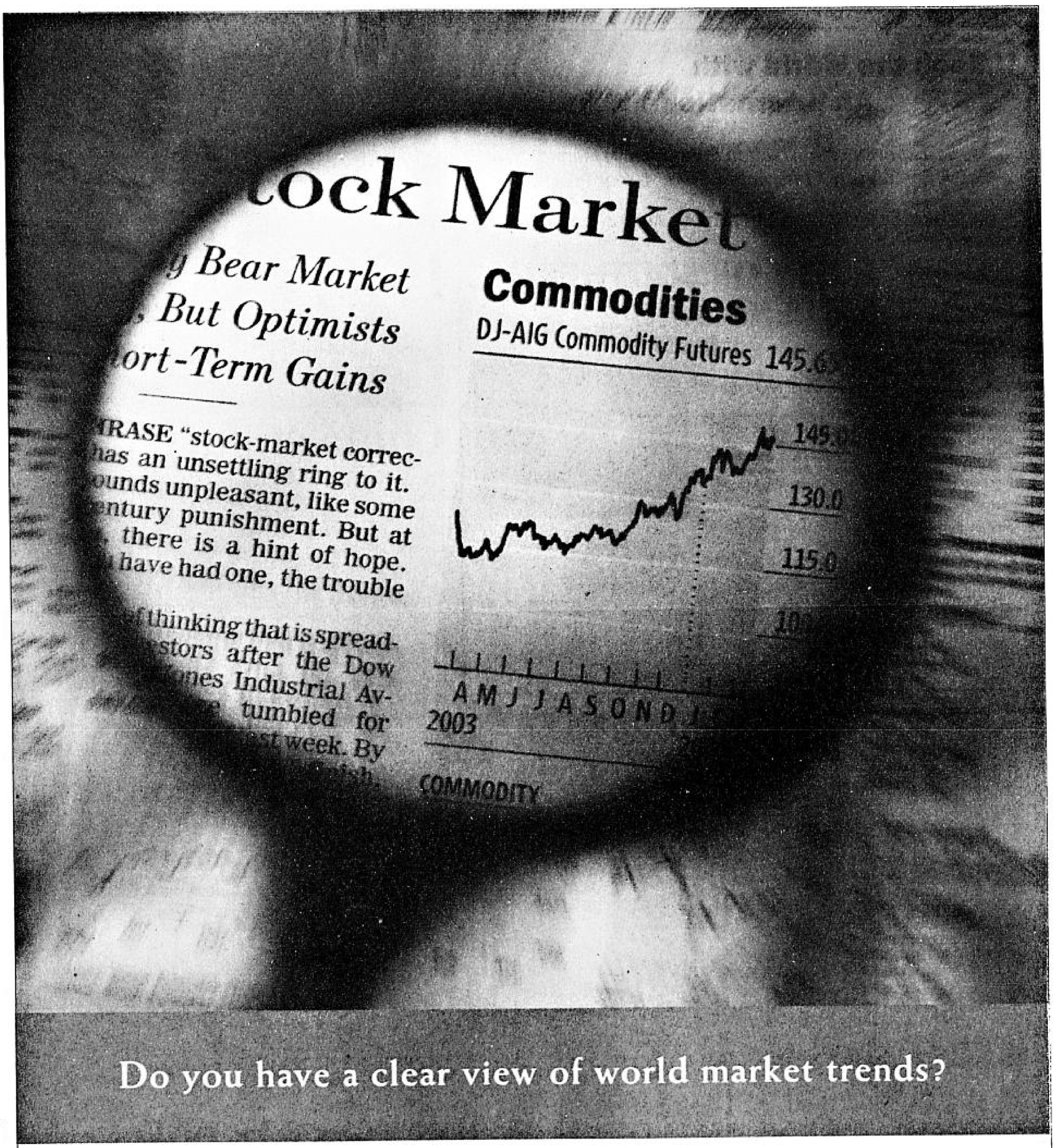

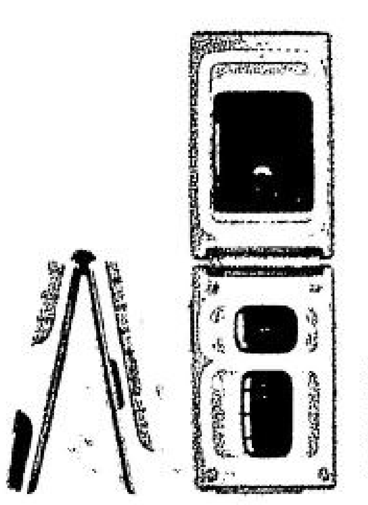

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Don't demonize globalization, OECD says

WASHINGTON—Rising hostility to globalization is being used by some governments to distract attention from poor domestic policies, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development said on Friday.

"When difficulties grow it is tempting to lay the blame on outsiders, explicitly or by default," OECD chief economist Jean-Philippe Cotis said in a speech.

Outsourcing jobs from the rich industrial world to cheaper locations like India and China has become a hot topic in a US presidential election year and sounded alarm bells elsewhere.

"Many people have been led to believe that globalization is at the root of all evils . . . this climate of sullen resentment has contributed to paralyzing reform efforts," he told the European Institute Trans-Atlantic Rountable.

But Cotis said governments—particularly in Europe and Japan—should not hide behind this process as an excuse for polices that have failed to create jobs and growth.

"It has to be said loud and clear that globalization is bringing more benefits than costs and that good national policies are more important for success than ever." The OECD has been a persistent critic of Europe's failure to enact painful reforms that would make its labor market more flexible and deal with rising healthcare and pension costs as the population ages.

This growth deficit has been clearly exposed in the current economic upturn, with the euro zone badly lagging not only the United States but the rest of the world including Japan, which has emerged convincingly from a decade of stagnation.

"Continental Europe is suffering from relatively weak growth prospects in the long run and very fragile domestic demand in the short-run. But this can hardly be blamed on globalization," he said. *Reuters*

Poverty rate cut in half since 1981, WB reports

WASHINGTON—The proportion of people living in dire poverty was nearly halved in the two decades to 2001 but progress was strikingly uneven, with millions in Africa and Latin America left out of dramatic gains seen in Asia, the World Bank said here Friday.

"There is good news—and that is that global poverty is falling rather quickly," Bank chief economist Francois Bourguignon told a press conference.

"But behind this very good news we have huge regional disparities," he said as the Bank released its annual World Development Indicators report.

Bourguignon described economic growth as "the driver in poverty reduction" but stressed that the world's poorest nations also need more aid from rich countries as well as greater access to markets in the developed world.

The Bank study found that the most vigorous strides in the war on poverty—notably in China and south Asia—occurred in countries where increases in trade and aid were accompanied by macroeconomic reforms that fostered investment and open markets.

The report said that thanks to spectacular victories by China and India against extreme poverty, defined as existence on less than a dollar a day, the world is on track to securing a reduction by half in the 1990 global poverty rate—28 percent —by 2015.

That target was deemed a Millennium Development Goal adopted by 189 countries in 2000.

The absolute number of people living on less than a dollar a day declined from about 1.5 billion in 1981 to 1.1 billion 20 years later, according to the World Bank.

The results achieved in China were described by Bank officials as staggering—the number of extremely poor people in absolute terms plunged from more than 600 million to 200 million, with the poverty rate dropping from 64 to 17 percent.

In India, 359 million people—35 percent of the population—were living in dire poverty in 2001, down from 382 million, 55 percent, in 1981.

But in a stark contrast to east and south Asia, poverty in the 20-year period under study deepened in sub-Saharan Africa. *AFP*

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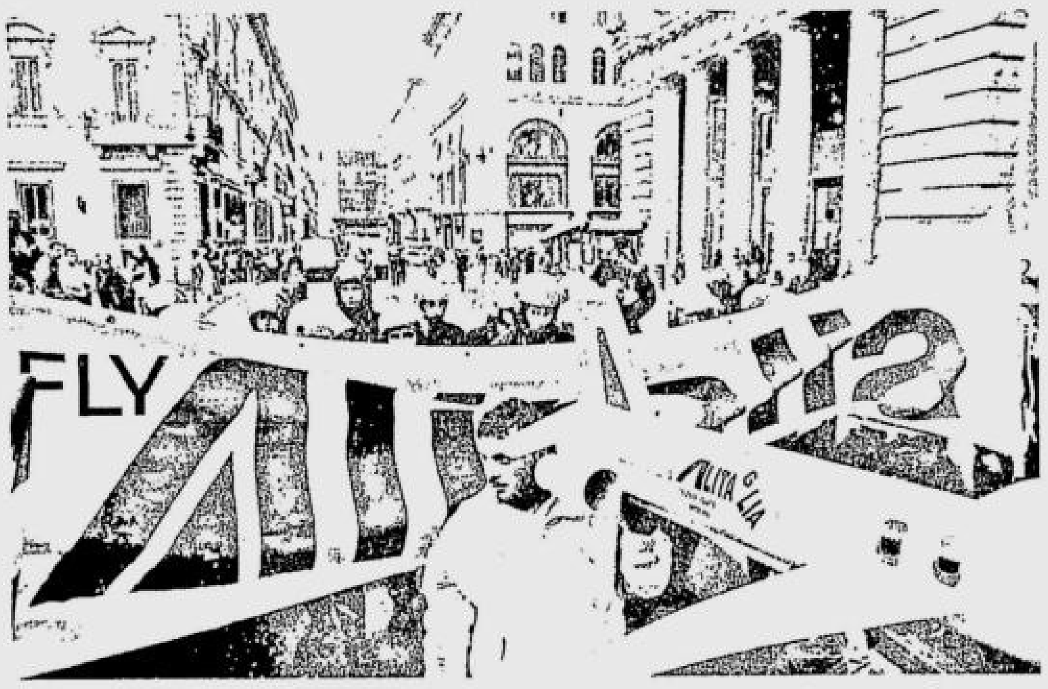

HUNDREDS of Italian airline Alitalia hold a sit-in in front of Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi's Chigi Palace in Rome. Italy's Economy ministry is working on an aid package to help the Italian airline sector in a move to support the troubled national carrier.
AFP

China shifts focus to home market

LONDON—The Chinese economy needs to raise the level of domestic consumption in order to maintain long-term growth and this could lead to a shift in the pattern of commodity consumption, analysts said on Friday.

Economists said they expected China to remain a major consumer of commodities in the next 20 to 30 years, but demand patterns are likely to shift as the economy matured.

"China faces some huge challenges in the next 30 years. It needs to develop a consumer society, which could be difficult given that it is a command economy," Edward Meir, metals analyst at Man Financial, said.

Angus MacMillan, minerals strategist at Pru-Bache International, said that infrastructure projects, particularly in the energy sector, would remain heavy consumers of aluminum and copper for some time.

In addition to increased use of base and minor metals, economists expected Chinese precious metal demand to rise.

MacMillan said that the country's banking system was immature compared to developments in the rest of the economy and changes needed to be made to ensure stability.

"There is almost certainly going to be an increase in demand for gold. Chinese are traditionally big savers. It certainly makes sense if you are looking at a banking system where there is a threat of instability that gold will be a natural haven for people with spare cash," MacMillan said.

Meir said that despite the potential, there was a risk that Chinese development could falter.

Analysts said that China would have to create an economic environment that encouraged people to spend, including low-level inflation, a developed consumer credit system and stable banks. *Reuters*

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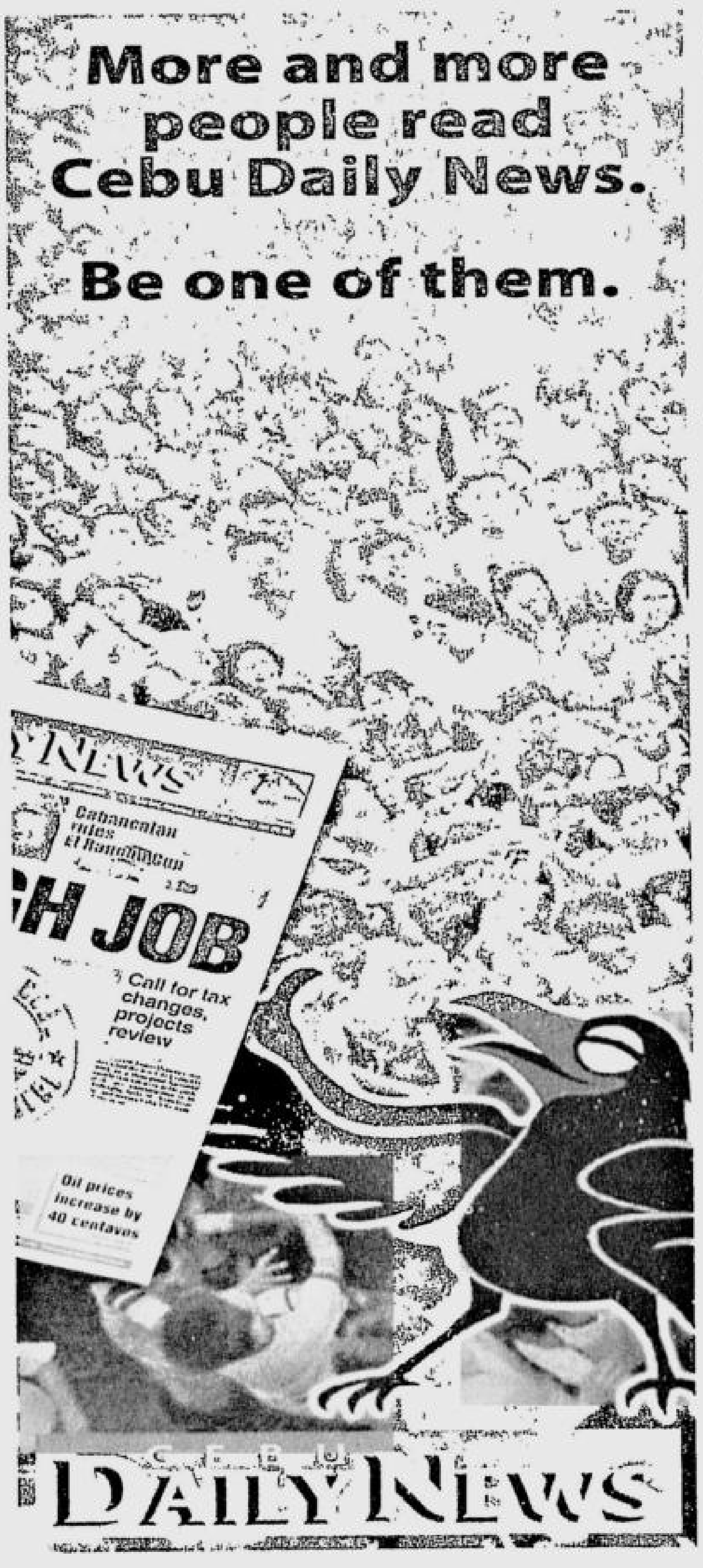
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Sony Ericsson posts profit

TOKYO, STOCKHOLM—Sony Ericsson Mobile Communications AB, the joint venture company of Sony and Ericsson, posted increased sales and profit in the first quarter.

Units shipped reached 8.8 million, a 63 percent increase compared to the same period last year. Sales for the quarter were Euro 1,338 million, representing a year-on-year increase of 66 percent. Income before taxes was Euro 97 million and net income was Euro 82 million, which represent year-on-year improvements of Euro 210 million and Euro 186 million respectively.

While the year-on-year growth in shipments and sales reflect solid performance improvements across business units and regions, income before taxes was strong due to favorable market conditions.

In addition, the restructuring measures that were taken in 2003 are now fully contributing to 'the bottom line.

US Fed rates seen to rise

ANNANDALE-ON-HUDSON, New York—Even as Fed officials warned on Friday that the central bank will have to raise interest rates eventually, they said there was no sign of surging inflation that could trigger an imminent move.

Indeed, because inflation rates are low, the Fed still has "the luxury of being accommodative," or keeping official interest rates supportive of growth, Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago president Michael Moskow said.

A chorus of central bank officials in recent days, led by Fed Chair Alan Greenspan, has sought to temper worries about inflation sparked by a jump in March consumer prices.

Much stronger than expected economic news in recent weeks has brought forward market expectations of the first Fed rate rise to August. The federal funds rate sits at one percent, the lowest level since 1958.

This view was boosted by March consumer prices which jumped by 0.5 percent over the previous month, while powerful global demand has also pushed up fuel and other commodity prices.

But Moskow, speaking at a Levy Institute economics conference, said: "We have yet to see the kinds of pressure on labor and capital resources that would foreshadow a worrisome increase in inflation."

Still, he noted the central bank will remain "vigilant" on the risks of inflation, a view echoed by Fed Vice Chair Roger Ferguson in an appearance at the Washington-based European Institute.

Moskow said although recent news may have pushed inflation expectations up a bit, it was not a reason for concern yet.

Policymakers worry that if people build in higher expectations for inflation, they will start charging higher prices and demanding higher wages, in a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Financial markets are on edge in the belief that Greenspan and other Fed representatives, while playing down worry about any imminent inflation breakout, are preparing the ground for an increase in official interest rates later this year.

Fed speakers in recent days have stressed that rates will have to rise at some point, with Fed Governor Ben Bernanke describing monetary policy as being in a "transition phase." *Reuters*

Profits may lift stocks, but rate fears nag

NEW YORK—US stocks look set to rise again this week, but only if the stellar first-quarter earnings season continues and investors overcome their fears of higher interest rates.

Each of the main US stock indexes moved up this week, putting them a touch above levels at the end of last year, as a string of industry leaders like Caterpillar Inc. and Microsoft Corp. blew past Wall Street's best hopes.

But Federal Reserve Chair Alan Greenspan put a dampener on the party as he suggested in two appearances this week that an increase in interest rates is not far off, as the Fed moves into position to fight off the first signs of inflation.

Stock investors dislike rising interest rates, which tend to make equity investments more expensive in relation to bonds, and may also cap corporate profit for a time, as higher borrowing costs eat into companies' budgets and consumers' purses.

But once the fact of rate hikes is accepted, companies will enjoy the fruits of the booming economy, many analysts say, predicting further gains for the market.

"Greenspan made it clearer that a rate hike is likely this year," said Jeff Kleintop, chief investment strategist at PNC Advisors. "But optimism from CEOs, in many cases heard for the first time since 1999, is bolstering investor confidence that corporate America can weather a series of rate hikes."

Excitement in the boardroom was led by James Owens, chief executive of Caterpillar, who said on Thursday that the world economy "will have one of the strongest, broadest recoveries in years" as his company reported a tripling of earnings.

Last week was a standout for corporate profits.

Of the 180 S&P 500 companies that reported earnings last week, 140 companies—or 78 percent—beat analysts' consensus estimates, according to Reuters Research.

So far this reporting season, 274 S&P components have reported, with 211 beating Wall Street's average expectation.

Those results helped push the Dow Jones industrial average up 0.2 percent for the week, the Standard & Poor's 500 Index up 0.5 percent and the Nasdaq Composite Index up 2.7 percent. It was the first week since April 2 when all the major indexes rose.

On Friday, the Dow gained 11.64 points, or 0.11 percent, to 10,472.84. The S&P 500 edged up 0.67 point, or 0.06 percent, to 1,140.60. The technology-focused Nasdaq gained 16.86 points, or 0.83 percent, to 2,049.77. *Reuters*

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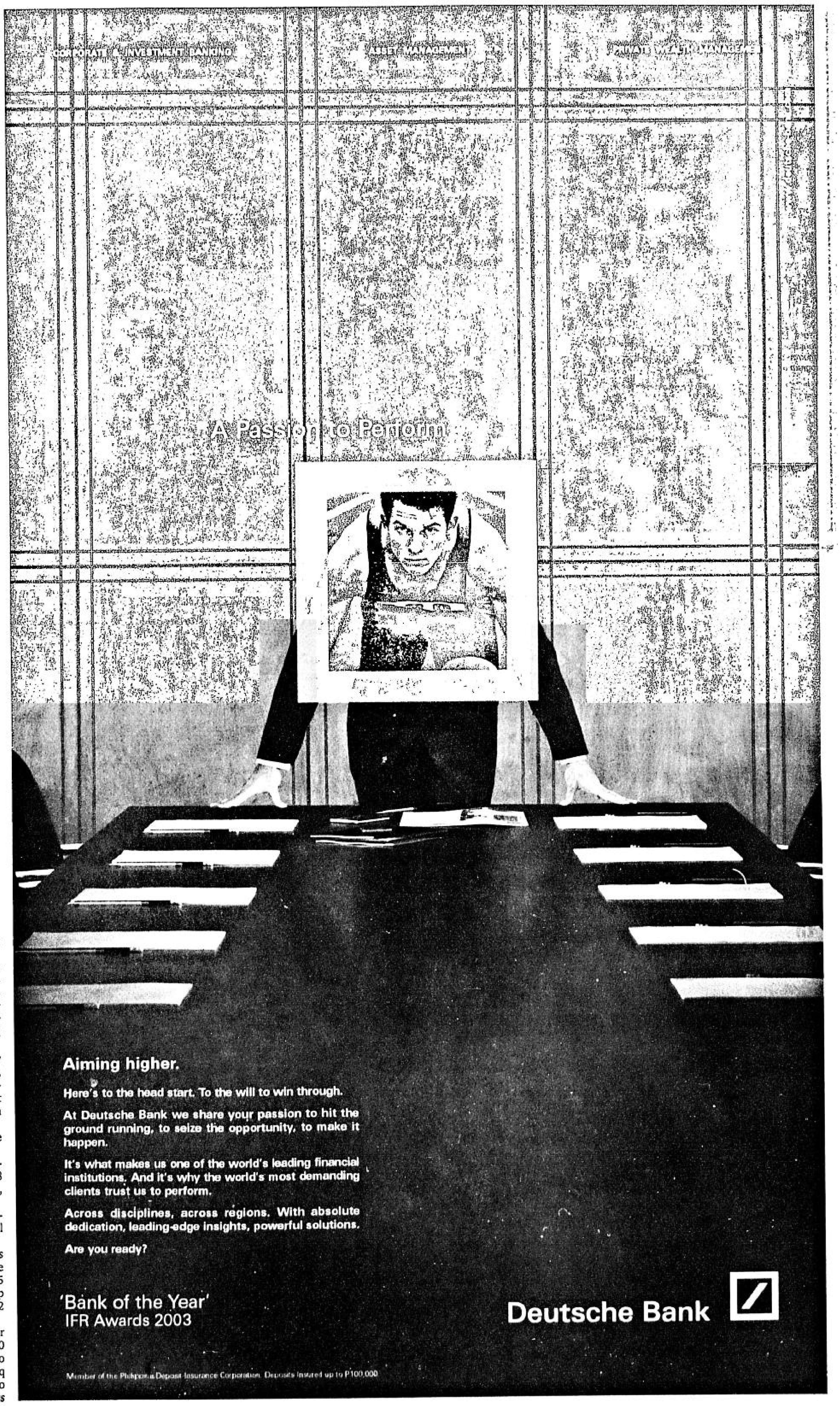

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Or by email to - sgt@angloeasterngroup.com

FILSCAP
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A non-stock, non-profit association of music composers, lyricists and publishers engaged in the collective administration of copyright is urgently in need of a:

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The successful candidate will report directly to the FILSCAP Board of Trustees and will be in charge of implementing the policies and programs approved by the Board governing the administration of rights vested in FILSCAP by its members and affiliated collecting societies worldwide.

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We are seeking for someone with a professional degree in either Business Administration, Business Management, Accountancy or Law and at least seven (7) years work experience. Experience in the music industry, especially in its business and copyright aspects, is preferred.

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A period of intensive training will be provided to the successful candidate and will include an orientation course with an affiliated collecting society abroad.

We offer an attractive remuneration package for the position. Applicants are invited to submit their resumé, present salary, expected salary and passport-size photo, no later than May 07, 2004 to:

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MACTAN CEBU INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT AUTHORITY
LAPU-LAPU CITY PHILIPPINES

INVITATION TO BID

1. The Mactan-Cebu International Airport Authority (MCIAA) through its Bids and Award Committee (BAC) with office at Mactan, Lapulapu City, invites previously pre-qualified contractors classified by the registered with the Philippine Contractor's Accreditation Board (PCAB) as Medium A to bid for Supply of Labor, tools, equipment, materials and supervision for the project: "Reinforcement of Existing Perimeter Fence (Phase I) at Airside". The Approved Budget for the Contract is P5,610,819.49.

Submission of Letter of Intent	April 27 to 30, 2004
Distribution of Bid Documents upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P3,000.00	May 3 to 7, 2004
Pre-Bid Conference	May 14, 2004 @ 9 a.m.
Bid Opening	May 28, 2004 & 10 a.m. (closing 9.45 a.m.)

2. For more information, please contact the BAC Secretariat at telephone number 3402486 local 2050/1461 or at telefax no. 341-4617.

3. The BAC reserves the right to reject any or all bids waive any defect or informality, assume no obligations whatsoever of indemnity to the bidders any expense of loss that it may incur in the preparation of its bid, and to accept the bid most advantageous to the Government.

(Sgd.) ATTY. ROGELIO C. YAUN
BAC Chairman

(PDI-April 19 & 26, 2004)

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REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
BUTUAN CITY WATER DISTRICT
Gov. Jose A. Rosales Avenue, Butuan City
Tel. No. (085) 342-3146 Fax No. (085) 341-5008

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Butuan City Water District hereby invites suppliers and distributors to apply for eligibility and to bid, in accordance with I.R.R. of R.A. 9184, for the supply and delivery of various Brass Fittings, Water Meters and HDPE Pipes;

PACKAGE 1: BRASS FITTINGS

Item No.	Quantity	Items/Description
1.a	8,975 Pcs.	Angle Meter Valve, 25 mm ø x 25 mm ø (ISO)
1.b	9,225 Pcs.	Coupling, 25 mm ø (ISO)
1.c	4,950 Pcs.	Coupling, 32 mm ø (ISO)
1.d	5,700 Pcs.	Corporation Stop, 32 mm ø (ISO)
1.e	3,500 Pcs.	Union, 25 mm ø (ISO)
1.f	750 Pcs.	Union, 32 mm ø (ISO)

Approved Budget : Php 5,600,000.00

PACKAGE 2: WATER METER ASSEMBLY

Item No.	Quantity	Items/Description
2	9,100 Pcs.	Water Meter Assembly, 1/2" ø, Non-Reversible Reading

Approved Budget : Php 5,733,000.00

PACKAGE 3: HDPE PIPES

Item No.	Quantity	Items/Description
3.a	361 Rolls.	Pipe 32 mm ø x 90 m, SDR 11 (ISO)
3.b	1,110 Rolls.	Pipe, 25 mm ø x 150 m, SDR 11 (ISO)

Approved Budget : Php 2,805,000.00

Specifications, details and bidding documents are available to interested applicants upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Php 1,000.00 per package from April 20, 2004 to May 3, 2004, at the BAC Secretariat during its business hours.

Pre-Bid Conference shall be held on May 21, 2004 at 2:00 PM at the Training Hall of BCWD Administration Building. Submission and opening of sealed bids shall follow on June 3, 2004 at 9.00 A.M. at the same venue.

Butuan City Water District reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to waive any defect or formality therein, to assume no responsibility whatsoever, to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expense incurred in the preparation of their bids, and to accept the offer most advantageous to the government.

(Sgd.) JORGE L. GUDUYO, C.E.
Chair, Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI – April 19 & 26, 2004)

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL DEFENSE
GENERAL HEADQUARTERS
ARMED FORCES OF THE PHILIPPINES
Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City
Telefax Nr 421-2327; 911-6001 Loc 6592
e-mail: pid@info.com.ph

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) invites all interested parties to apply for eligibility and to bid for the **Supply and Delivery of One (1) Lot AFP E-Services Portal** with an approved budget of **Twenty Eight Million Eight Hundred Thousand Pesos (Php 28,800,000.00)** chargeable against the AFP share from BCDA ALI Lot C Lease Agreement.

Only bids from entities who are manufacturers/suppliers/distributors/integrators of said equipment shall be entertained

Bid documents will be available for issuance starting **April 19, 2004** until **May 26, 2004** during office hours at the BAC Secretariat, Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Capability, Materiel and Technology Development, J9, GHQ, AFP, 3rd Floor, Bulwagang Mabini, Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City upon payment of **Two Thousand Eight Hundred Pesos (Php 2,800.00)**, which is non refundable. The form of payment shall be in cash or cashier's check in favor of the AFP Modernization Act Trust Fund.

A Special Power of Attorney, issued by the prospective bidder, authorizing its representative to purchase the bid documents in its behalf, shall be required before issuance of said documents.

A Pre-Bid Conference is scheduled on **May 07, 2004 at 2:00 PM** (local time) at the Silid Panday Pira, 1st Floor, Bulwagang Mabini, Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City. Bidders may submit their query/ies, if any, in writing to the BAC Secretariat not later than three (3) working days prior to the Pre-Bid Conference.

Deadline for Submission of Bids is on **May 27, 2004 at 09:00 AM** (local time) and followed the Opening of Bids at **09:30 AM** at the Silid Panday Pira, 1st Floor, Bulwagang Mabini, Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City.

The Armed Forces of the Philippines reserves the right to reject any or all bids based on the grounds specified in RA 9184 without assuming any obligation whatsoever for any expenses or losses that may be incurred by the bidder in the preparation of his bid.

(Sgd.) REYNALDO D RIVERA
Major General AFP
Chairman, BAC

(PDI – April 19 & 26, 2004)

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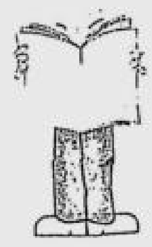

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NATIONAL POWER CORPORATION
Diliman, Quezon City

INVITATION TO BID FOR THE SALE SCRAP/JUNK ITEMS

"AS IS, WHERE IS" BASIS

DATE OF BIDDING : May 18 and 19, 2004, 2:00 PM, Solarium Multi-Purpose Rooms, Bldg.-1 Ground Floor, NPC-HO, Agham Road, corner Quezon Ave., Diliman, Quezon City

The National Power Corporation will conduct public bidding of the following scrap and junk items:

Schedule-I, May 18, 2004, 2:00 PM Solarium Multi-Purpose Rooms

	Item Description and Location	Minimum Bid Price
1.	One (1) lot of scrap metals consisting of 1-unit Terex Payloader, 1 unit Clark Forklift, 1 unit Bulldozer, 1-unit moveable centrifuge, 1-unit lube oil heater, 1-set turbine casing, 3-units turbine rotors, one (1) lot assorted scrap metals and one (1) lot unserviceable GPE located at Cebu Power Plant Complex, Naga, Cebu.	P 586,500.00/lot
2.	One (1) lot scrap metals consisting of pipes, plant parts, steel plate cuttings, steel frames, radiators, aluminum cladding, 300 pcs. used tires, 76 pcs. used batteries and other scrap items located at the Tongonan GPP	P 336,800.00/lot
3.	Waste Lube Oil, approximately 80 drums, net of water and drums not included located at Tongonan GPP, Leyte	P 300.00/drum
4.	One (1) lot of junk and unserviceable items consisting of 12 units junk motor vehicles, 2 units Fuel oil storage tanks, 2 units over head cranes, 1 unit forklift (Please note that dismantling and of fuel oil tanks is on clean-up basis) located at Amlan DPP, Negros Oriental Province	P 388,296.00/lot

Schedule-II, May 19, 2004, 2:00 PM, Solarium Multi-Purpose Rooms

	Item Description and Location	Minimum Bid Price
1.	One (1) lot unserviceable condenser tubes, 865 pcs located at Batangas Coal-Fired Thermal Power Plant, Calaca, Batangas	P 351,840.00/lot
2.	One (1) lot structural Steel and junk items at the 2nd floor level of the Blaisdell Bldg (to be dismantled and clean-up basis) at Manila Thermal Power Plant, Isla De Provisor	P 196,000.00/lot
3.	One (1) lot junk and scrap metals located at the Malaya Thermal Power Plant (KEPHILCO), Pililla, Rizal	P 724,000.00/lot
4.	One (1) lot junk and scrap items located at the Lubang DPP, Lubang Island, Occidental Mindoro.	P 695,000.00/lot

ALL BIDS MUST BE SUBMITTED WITH THE FOLLOWING:

1. PROPOSAL BOND DEPOSIT IN THE FORM OF CASH OR MANAGER'S/CASHIER'S CHECK EQUIVALENT TO TEN PERCENT (10%) OF THE TOTAL BID PRICE.
2. LATEST INCOME TAX RETURN (2003 ORIGINAL OR XEROX COPY OF THE BIDDER OR AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENT (ORIGINAL) OF THE COMPANY.
3. BIDDERS FOR ITEM-3, SCHEDULE-1 MUST PRESENT PREVIOUSLY APPROVED PERMIT TO TRANSPORT AND ACCREDITATION AS WASTE OIL TREATER.

All interested parties who wish to secure bid forms for this public bidding must present a valid Tax Identification Card or Income Tax Return.

Interested parties who wish to participate in the public bidding may secure the bid form at P500.00/set from Mr. S V. Lomuntad, Jr. at Bldg. 1, Ground Floor, NPC Head Office, Corner Agham Road and Quezon Ave., Diliman, Q.C. or call telephone no. 924-5384. Deadline for issuance of bid forms is 4:30 PM May 17, 2004 for Schedule-1 and May 18, 2004 for Schedule-II.

For the Materials Management Department
(Sgd.) FELIX B. TACATA, JR.
OIC, MMD

(PDI – April 26, 27 & 28, 2004)

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CADP
GROUP CORP.

INVITATION TO BID

Central Azucarera Don Pedro, Inc (CADPI) and CADP Group Corp. (CADPGC) will conduct a **SEALED BIDDING** for the sale of various disposable assets and scrap metals/materials on **"AS IS WHERE IS BASIS"**.

ITEM DESCRIPTION (PARTIAL ONLY) & LOCATION

I. **CADPI, Bgy. Lumbangan, Nasugbu, Batangas**
   1. One (1) unit York Shipley Boiler, 20 tons steam/hr cap
   2. One (1) unit Cleaver Brooks Boiler, 40 tons steam/hr cap
   3. One (1) lot Scrap iron/metal, est. 50 tons
   4. One (1) lot Assorted Excess Parts/Materials

II. **CADPGC, Bgy. Consuelo, La Carlota City, Negros Occidental**
   1. Two (2) units Boiler 13 & 14, 22 tons steam/hr cap each
   2. One (1) unit Boiler 15, 20 tons steam/hr cap
   3. Two (2) units Boiler 16 & 17, 34 tons steam/hr cap each
   4. One (1) unit Cleaver Brooks Boiler, 22 tons steam/hr cap
   5. Three (3) units Diesel Generator
   6. Two (2) units Payloader
   7. One (1) lot Scrap iron/metal, est. 460 tons
   8. One (1) lot Scrap cast iron, est. 3 tons
   9. One (1) lot Scrap bronze, ext. 5 tons

BIDDING INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Bid documents & forms are available for issuance from **May 03-07, 2004** during office hours at the Purchasing Offices of CADPI Batangas & CADPGC Carlota and at Corporate Purchasing, Makati Head Office upon payment of the non-refundable fee of P 250/set each for CADPI & CADPGC.
2. Bidders MUST attend the **PRE-BID MEETING** – CADPI Nasugbu on **May 04, 10 AM at the Guest House** & CADPGC La Carlota on **May 06, 2004, 2 PM at the Sports Club**. The complete list of items for bidding, including the minimum bid prices, forms part of the bid documents. Inspection of the items for sale may be conducted during the scheduled pre-bid meeting dates.
3. Bidders MUST submit bids in the **PRESCRIBED FORMS** separately for CADPI & CADPGC. Deadline for submission of bids is on **MAY 17, 2004**. All bids MUST be submitted with the BID **BOND DEPOSIT** in the form of Cashier's or Manager's Check equivalent to 20% of the bidder's Total Bid Price. In addition, the bidder's **Latest Income Tax Return or Financial Statement** of the Company (original or BIR certified copy) MUST be submitted on or before **May 10, 2004.**
4. For additional information, please see or call **Mr. Bernie Ilagan** at CADPI Nasugbu **(Tel# 043-9313446)**, **Mr. Rey Tano** at CADPGC La Carlota **(Tel# 034-4602853)** or **Ms. Chapie Conti** at Makati Head Office **(Tel# 810-8901/894-0954).**

The Corporation reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to waive any formalities or defects found therein and to accept such bids or award to any bidder whose bid is considered most advantageous to our company.

(Sgd.) Dean L. Guevarra
VP CMMGS

(PDI - April 26, 2004)

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL DEFENSE
GENERAL HEADQUARTERS
ARMED FORCES OF THE PHILIPPINES
Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City
Telefax Nr 421-2327; 911-6001 Loc 6592; 9117551
website: www.afp.mil.ph
e-mail: pid@info.com.ph

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

(Re-bidding)

The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) invites all interested parties to apply for eligibility and to bid in the 2-Stage bid process for the Acquisition of Equipment for Two (2) Coast Watch Stations of the Philippine Navy with an approved budget of Fifty-Three Million and Six Hundred Thousand Pesos (Php53,600,000.00). Said budget shall be charged against the AFP Modernization Program funds.

Only bids from accredited integrators of coastal surveillance systems shall be entertained.

The 1st stage bid documents shall be available for issuance starting **April 26, 2004** until **June 02, 2004** during office hours at the BAC Secretariat, Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Capability, Materiel and Technology Development, J9, GHQ, AFP, 3rd Floor Bulwagang Mabini, Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City. The bid documents shall be issued upon payment of Five Thousand, Three Hundred and Sixty Pesos (Php5,360.00), which is not refundable. The form of payment shall be in cash or cashier's check in favor of the AFP Modernization Act Trust Fund.

A Special Power of Attorney, issued by the prospective bidder, authorizing its representative to purchase the 1st stage bid documents in its behalf, shall be required before issuance of said documents.

A Pre-Bid Conference is scheduled on **May 17, 2004** at 9:00 am (local time) at the Silid Panday Pira, 1st Floor Bulwagang Mabini. Bidders may submit their query/ies, if any, in writing to the BAC Secretariat not later than seven (7) working days prior to the Pre-Bid Conference.

Deadline for submission of 1st stage envelopes is on **June 03, 2004** at 9:00 am (local time) and followed by the Opening of Bids at 9:30 am at Silid Panday Pira. Only those bidders found eligible shall be allowed to participate in the 2nd stage bidding activities.

The AFP reserves the right to reject any or all bids based on the grounds for disqualification specified in RA 9184 without assuming any obligation whatsoever for expenses or losses that may be incurred by the bidder(s) in the preparation of the bid.

FOR THE CHAIRMAN DND-BAC;

(Sgd.) **DIR RAMON EL MARTINEZ**
Vice-Chairman, DND-BAC

(PDI–April 26 & May 3, 2004)

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People, Events & Products

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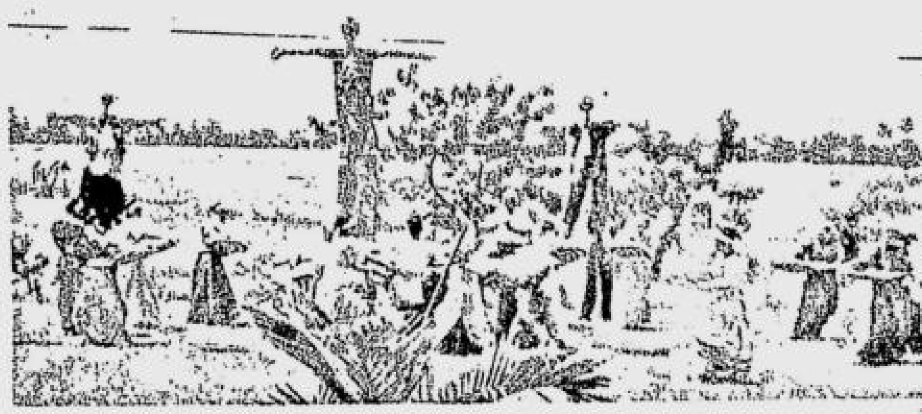
Editor Aries Espinosa

'Island Caravan' showcases RP's best island destinations

THE WHITE sand and clear waters are just some of Boracay's many attractions


HAVE a taste of the islands' rich culture such as this one in Calapan City, Oriental Mindoro

THE PHILIPPINES has a total of 7,107 islands and for a traveler who wishes to experience the country's many island destinations, the best method would be to visit the ports of these islands.

The Nautical Highway provides this chance by linking distant islands through a network of ferries for inter-island travel. Aside from the ease of travel and the relatively low cost that it offers, the opening of the Nautical Highway also proves to be beneficial in injecting new life into the islands' local tourism and trade.

Maximizing this opportunity and also as a way of promoting domestic tourism is the "Island Caravan: The Nautical Highway Adventure", a five-day journey to destinations in Southern Luzon and Western Visayas along the Nautical Highway.

The trip features special nightly events at every stop that provides an exciting experience for travelers. It also highlights the rich history, culture and economic opportunities of the two regions through community interaction and trade shows. There's also passport stamping in every destination, a distinguishing mark that proves that one has gone to these places. And at the end of the journey, the caravan would be capped with a colorful celebration and participants who have completed the whole trip would be awarded "Certificates of Conquest."

Day 1 of the tour would take you from Manila to the port of Batangas to Puerto Galera, where you'll experience beach hopping, feast on their food festival or enjoy the breeze as you indulge in a beach massage.

Experience also the life of the Mangyans, the natives of the island of Mindoro, at Talipanan. Trek to their waterfalls or witness a basket-weaving demo.

Go *tiangge* shopping while still in Puerto Galera on Day 2. Drive through Mindoro's farms and rural communities going to Calapan. See the Tamaraw Falls and visit the newly constructed City Hall, the Calapan Museum, the cathedral and the city proper.

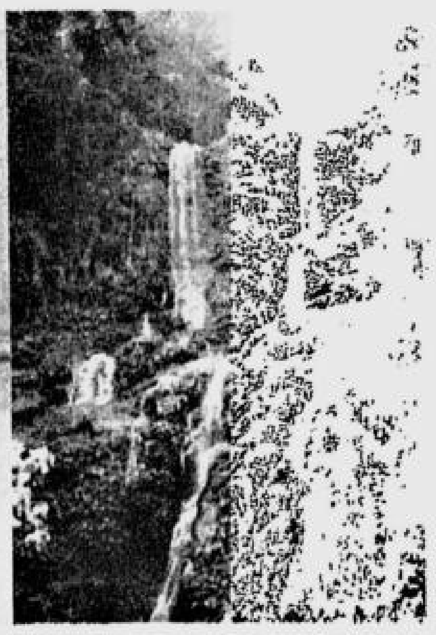
On Day 3, have a taste of the trip's ultimate *roro* (roll-on roll-off) ride as you traverse the high seas going further down South to Caticlan, then followed by a fun-filled ferry ride to Boracay. In Boracay, experience the nightlife of one of the best beaches in the world.

The next day, dive, sail or ride banana boats and enjoy Boracay's pristine waters! The white sand and clear waters are just some of Boracay's many attractions. Still have some energy left after all these? Go wall climbing, then.

Going back to Manila, bring home more than a tan. Go shopping at Boracay's quaint shops.

"Island Caravan" has had two successful runs. The first was held March 26 to 30, and the second April 17 to 21. The third and last run would be on May 15 to 19.

Sponsored by the Department of Tourism and Petron Blaze, the "Island Caravan: The Nautical Highway Adventure" was conceptualized and organized by Skoal Advertising and the Island Caravan Consortium composed of some of the largest tour operators in the country-TRIPS Travel (752-4772), Baron Travel (817-0203), Annset Holidays (400-6521), Sampaguita Travel (817-7620), Marsman Tours and Travel (887-0000), Rajah Tours (522-0541) and Travel Edge (845-2230)-with the main objective of promoting inter-regional domestic travel.


ASIDE from the beaches, you can also visit Tamaraw Waterfalls at Puerto Galera

The group previously handled the highly successful Explore Caravans under the Go North Philippines! of the Office of Presidential Assistant for North Luzon.

The "Island Caravan" is expected to set the trend for traveling in the country through organized caravan tours along the Nautical Highway System.

For reservations and for further inquiries, call any of the tour operators listed or call Skoal Advertising at 896-1910, or fax 896-1893.

RP'S biggest franchise show set

THE COUNTRY'S franchise community is all keyed up as the Philippine Franchise Association (PFA) unrolls the red carpet to welcome franchisers and other participants to the Philippines' biggest and most-awaited franchise show, Franchise 2004, the 12th Philippine International Conference and Expo (Pifce). The event, to be held from July 15 to 18, is a joint undertaking with the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI). For inquiries, call the PFA secretariat at 687-0366 to 67, or e-mail pfa@nwave.net.

A virtual one-stop shopping for franchising with a four-in-one event, Franchise 2004 consists of plenary sessions on July 15 and educational seminars/workshops for would-be franchisers and franchisees on July 16, both at the Westin Philippine Plaza; the biggest franchise expo from July 16 to 18 at the World Trade Center (WTC); and the Certificate on Franchise Executives (CFE) Program on July 13 and 14 at the Asian Institute of Management (AIM).

With this year's theme "Franchising: A Gateway to Local and Global Opportunities", PFA chair Samie Lim and president Alegria Bing Sibal-Limjoco announce that this year's premier event will even be better and bigger, with the invitation of both local and international experts to speak on various issues, latest updates and trends in franchising. Plenary topics include "Developing Effective Branding and Marketing Strategies to Promote A Franchise Brand", "Targeting the Right Market", and "Formulas for Success", while Day Two topics include "Enticing Entrepreneurs to Become Franchisers and Franchisees", "Franchisee Profiling", "The As to Zs of Buying a Franchise", "Understanding Your Franchiser", "Local Store Marketing", and "Reading the Bottomline".

As an all-encompassing exhibition, Limjoco disclosed that Franchise 2004 Expo will cover key elements of the industry such as food, retail, and service, which will be featured in the following pavilions: a showcase of the Franchise Excellence Awards (FEA) 2003 winners; Philippine Business Licensing; Business Opportunity; and the Incubation Center for Micro Enterprises and Future Homegrown Franchises.

Lim noted that franchising, in its short history in the Philippines, has shown remarkable resilience in weathering the economic ups and down of the country. In the face of the recent worldwide economic slowdown that has affected the country as well, the franchise sector has remained upbeat and a significant global force. With the ever-increasing export of products and services available through franchised businesses to market places world-wide, there has fortunately been a corresponding increase in the information available to franchisers, he added.

Unrivalled in quality and quantity, Franchise 2004 hopes to welcome more than 10,000 attendees in both conference and expo. Pifce manages to bring into the market an average of 50 to 100 new homegrown and foreign concepts annually. A number of successful franchises today, in fact, established their roots through Pifce.

This year's Franchise 2004 Organizing Committee is headed by Roberto Ocampo (Max's) as the overall 12th Pifce chair; Terry Yap (McDonald's) and Ricky Mercado (Red Ribbon), Conference chair and co-chair respectively; Vince Padilla (Padi's Point) and Les Reyes (Reyes Haircutters), expo chair and co-chair respectively; Tiffany del Rosario (Subway), Leo Riingen (Informatics), and Teodoro Ilano (Greenwich), program and speakers committee Carlo Buenaflor (Bigg's) and Lin Deres (Goldilocks), Educational Seminars/Workshops; Virgilio Espeleta (Julie's Bakeshop), Ricardo Andres (Candy Corner), Dr. Emma Beleno-Guerrero (Bioessence) Attendance Promotion; Jay Aldeguer (Islands Souvenir) and Pinky Estrebillo (Bayo) publicity and promotions.

CAFÉ LUPE GRAND DRAW WINNER

Café Lupe Family Restaurant recently awarded the grand prize of trip for two to Mexico City with its major sponsor Mexicana Airlines. Shown at the event were (from left) Vince Reyes, account executive, Mexicana Airlines, Marose Rockwell, vice president, Charisms Advertising Inc, winner Jennifer Stellon-Jose, Mel Gonzaga, HR manager, Café Lupe Family Restaurant, Leah Grace Gamboa, sales manager-Mexicana Airlines, Julie Lingo, account executive, Mexicana Airlines, Paz Reyes, operations manager, Café Lupe Family Restaurant and Troy Alcala, operations manager, McGraphics Carranz.

New insurance payment scheme from AsianLife Financial

ASIANLIFE Financial, a leading life insurance provider and a member of ATR Group of Companies, has reiterated its commitment to give quality service that can be availed of through an Easy Salary Deduction Scheme. According to FVP for sales and marketing Annaliza Gonzales, the new Easy Salary Deduction Scheme has the following advantages: 1. Gives employees and their immediate family members the opportunity to enjoy financial protection no matter what happens; 2. Can be done without the trouble of having to personally remit contributions; 3. Proven systematic way of having policies in force and making sure future contingencies are always met; 4. Contribution is nominal and is affordable, and; 5. The program has automatic reinstatement features.

ORACLE APPOINTS TECHNOPAQ

Oracle (Philippines) Corp, the local subsidiary of the world's largest enterprise software company, recently appointed Technopaq Inc as its newest value-added distributor (VAD). Technopaq will be carrying all Oracle products in the 10g platform, which includes Oracle Database 10g, Oracle Application Server 10g, Oracle Internet Developer Suite. It will also offer Oracle's e-mail solution Oracle Collaboration Suite. Technopaq will be handling the mid-market for Oracle where Technopaq has a solid network of resellers. Signing the contract are Francis Ong (left), director of alliances and channels, Oracle Philippines Corp and Harmit Wasan, CEO, Technopaq.

Bits & Clips

Housing loan promo

FOLLOWING the heels of the successful 6-percent promo for Home Suite Loan, East West Bank recently launched another attractive offer for those who want to acquire their dream house and lot the easier way, and it is ongoing until July 31. During the promo period, Home Suite Loan clients can take advantage of the program's borrower-friendly payment scheme options, competitive interest rates, additional equity line and quick processing period. Applicants will enjoy a competitive interest rate of 10.5 percent for the fixed year. And as a first for East West Bank, fixed housing loan rates for two, three, four and five years are now being offered at competitive rates. Home Suite Loan's Deferred Payment Scheme feature allows clients to pay only the loan's interest during the first year of the term. For inquiries, call East West Bank at 8-ACCESS (822-2377).

St. Mary's silver jubilee

THE CLASS of 1979 of the high school department of St. Mary's College of Quezon City celebrates its silver jubilee celebration aptly titled "The Last of the Seventies-Saturday Night, the Fever is On!" in July. Members of the Marian Class of 1979 are enjoined to call Agnes Zapanta-Bengco at 427-2771 or 0917-5305170 or Joy Cirineo at 628-0575 or 0917-5311984.

Taking load off traveling

EQUITABLE Card Network and MasterCard International have once more teamed up to make traveling truly pleasurable and hassle-free by providing more perks and benefits and, at the same time, reduce certain limitations. Consider: Equitable Travel Card extends one of the lowest exchange rates for earning points. P40= 1 Travel E-points; points earned may be used to travel the way you want-by land, sea or air; no hidden charges. No annual service fee. No joining fee. And, free credit is extended for two years; credit limits are in peso and dollar; more value for your money because interest is computed based on unpaid or outstanding balance, not on average daily balance. Plus, on your first use of your Equitable Travel Card you enjoy a bonus of 1,000 travel E-points until Aug. 7. A minimum charge of P200,000 earns an additional 1,000 Travel E-points.

Zoobic Safari Adventure roars

GO TO a live Tiger Safari Adventure, be thrilled to the sight of exquisite golden-striped tigers roaming and frolicking in their natural habitat. Feel your excitement rise as you hear their vibrating growl.

Zoobic Safari is one attraction you will find at Subic Bay Freeport's Forest Adventure. Embracing almost a 15-hectare land, local and foreign guests can expect an astonishing sight of diverse exotic animals roaming and frolicking in their natural habitat. It features a wide range of habitats present in the forest due to the terrain, presence of streams, fringing grasslands, and other breaks in the canopy. These represent the major habitats for varied exotic animals featured in Zoobic Safari adventure park.

Zoobic Safari offers a unique ride in a Safari Jeep through a vast expanse of savannah amidst the Ilanin forest in Subic. With the help of a highly trained Aeta driver/guide, guests will be treated to an exciting journey guaranteed to make their visit memorable.

A spin-off of Tagaytay Residence Inn and Safari de Oro in Bukidnon, Zoobic Safari features a Tiger Safari, Petting Zoo, Serpentarium, and Picnic Ravine, among others, to showcase the animals of various provinces and countries. The zoo has been designed to make the animals blend in with the natural scenery in the forest. So, get captivated by the deep golden eyes of the tigers. Be exhilarated by the colorful birds and the grandeur of their flights, wonder at the stance of the deer and ostriches.

Zoobic Safari welcomes all interested sponsors, strategic partners, donors and even investors to be part of this wildlife project.

Zoobic Safari is operated by the Yupangco Group of Companies, in joint venture with the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority (SBMA). The former likewise runs Tagaytay Residence Inn, a zoo/resort site that is perfect for educational trips, family outings and company8 functions, and Residence Inn Blu Blanco Hotel in Clark field, Pampanga, which has 46 safari-inspired rooms-ideal for seminars as well.

Money-making recipes

LEARN different recipes that could add up to your income. Sylvia Reynoso-Gala, together with some of her family members, is offering short courses in cooking and baking, cake decorating, and sausage making.

Lessons in culinary arts are open for both beginners and non-beginners. From fastfood recipes to baked products, from Chinese dishes to other cuisine, they offer cooking demos and hands-on training. The registration fee covers the ingredients to be used.

All lessons will be conducted by Sylvia Reynoso-Gala, Leni Reynoso-Araullo, Ernest Reynoso Gala or Morella Reynoso Gala. Registration is open. Visit them at 181 Shaw Boulevard, Pasig or call 671-4486, 671-4472, or 671-4489 for details.

Sponsors include Century Tuna, Campbell's Soup, Panasonic, Magnolia Gold Butter, Magnolia Chicken, Monterey, Birch Tree, Angel Evaporada and Ricoa.

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Editor Aries Espinosa

'Island Caravan' showcases RP's best island destinations

THE WHITE sand and clear waters [illegible]

HAVE a taste of the islands [illegible]

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RP'S biggest franchise show set

THE COUNTRY'S franchise community is all keyed up as the Philippine Franchise A[illegible] PFA [illegible] the red carpet to w[illegible] [illegible] and other participants to the Philippines' biggest and most awaited franchise show, Franchise 2004, the 12th Philippine International Conference and Expo (Pifce). The [illegible] held from July 15 to 1[illegible] a joint undertaking with the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI). For inquiries call the PFA [illegible] 687-0366 [illegible] 6[illegible] pfa@[illegible]nwave.net

A virtual one stop [illegible] opp[illegible] franchising with a [illegible] Franchise 2004 [illegible] sessions on July 15 and [illegible] seminars workshops for franchisers and franchise[illegible] 16, both [illegible] We[illegible] Plaza; th[illegible] from July 16 to [illegible] Wo[illegible] Center (WTC) and [illegible] Franchise Executive [illegible] on July 13 and [illegible] tute of Man[illegible] AIM [illegible]

With th[illegible] ing: A Gate[illegible] Opp[illegible]tun[illegible] and Lim[illegible]

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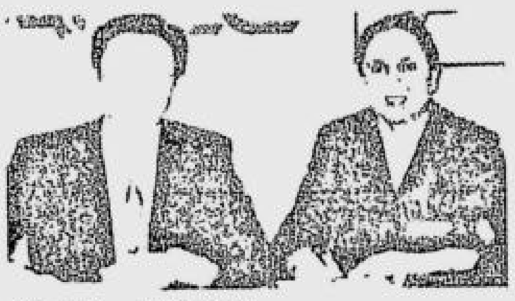

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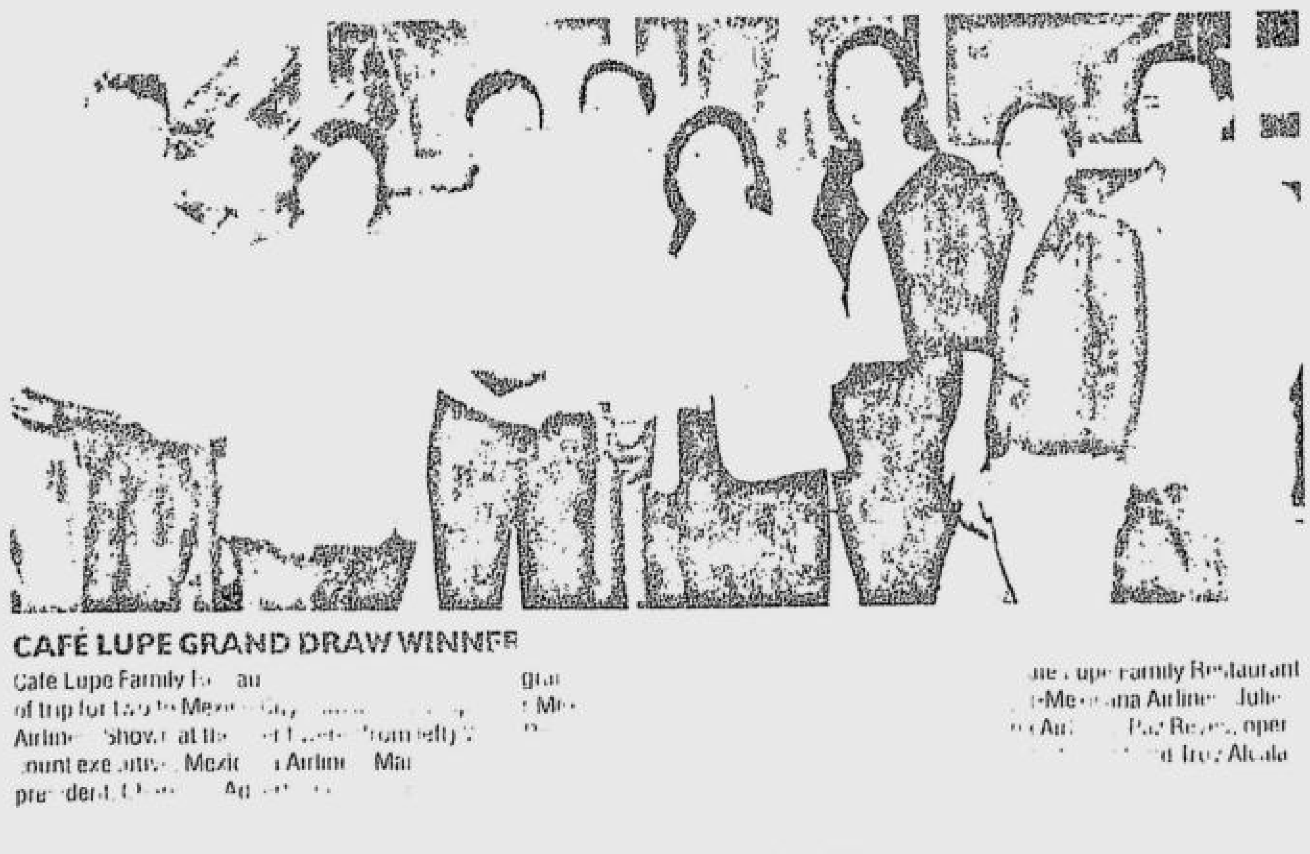

CAFÉ LUPE GRAND DRAW WINNER

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New insurance payment scheme from AsianLife

ASIANLIFE Financial, a leading life insurance pro[illegible] member of ATR Group of Companies, has reiterated its commitment to give quality service that can be availed of through an Easy Salary Deduction Scheme. According to FVP for sales and marketing Annaliza Gonzales, the new Easy Salary Deduction Scheme has the following advantages: 1. Gives employees and their immediate family members [illegible] [illegible] by financial protection no matter what happens [illegible] can be done without the trouble of having to personally remit contributions; 3. Proven systematic way of having policies in force and making sure future contingencies are always met; 4. Contribution is nominal and is affordable; and, 5. The program has automatic reinstatement features

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Sony Ericsson banks on camera-crazy RP market

By Alexander F. Villafania

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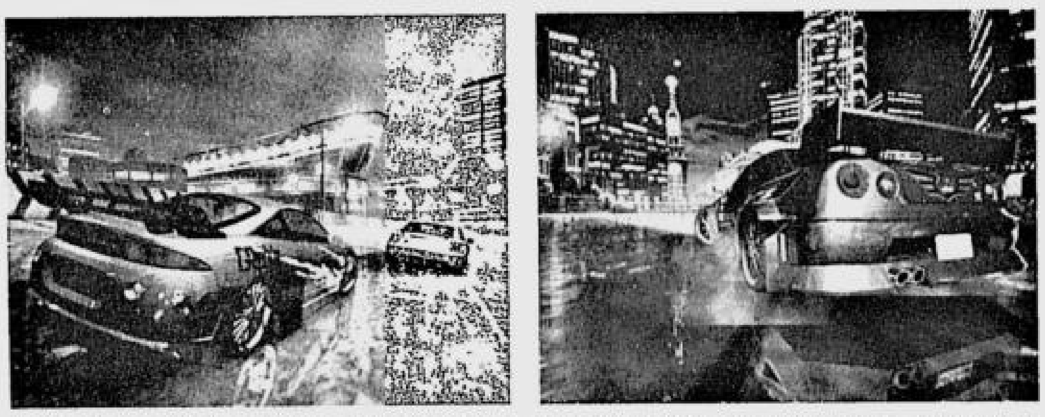

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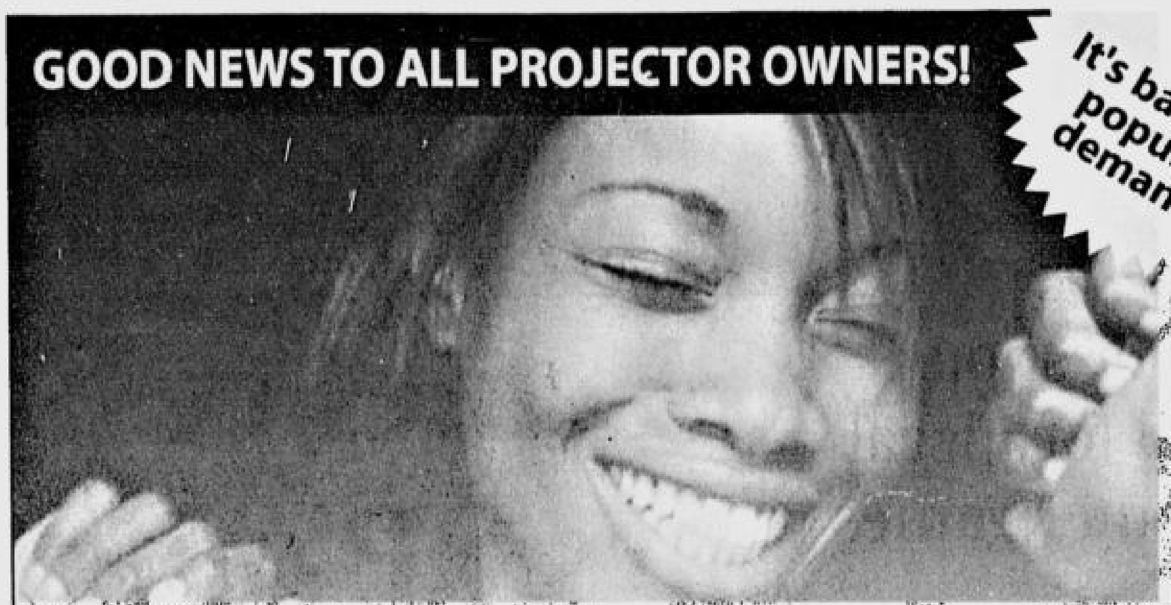

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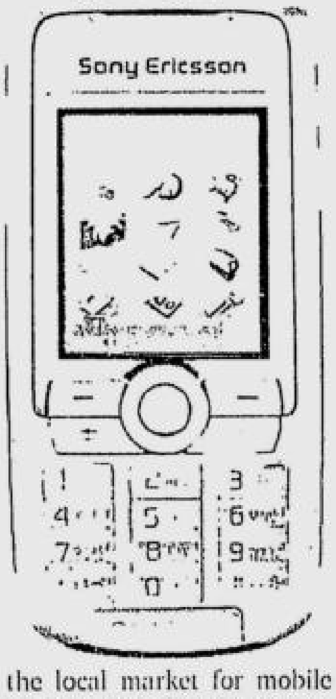

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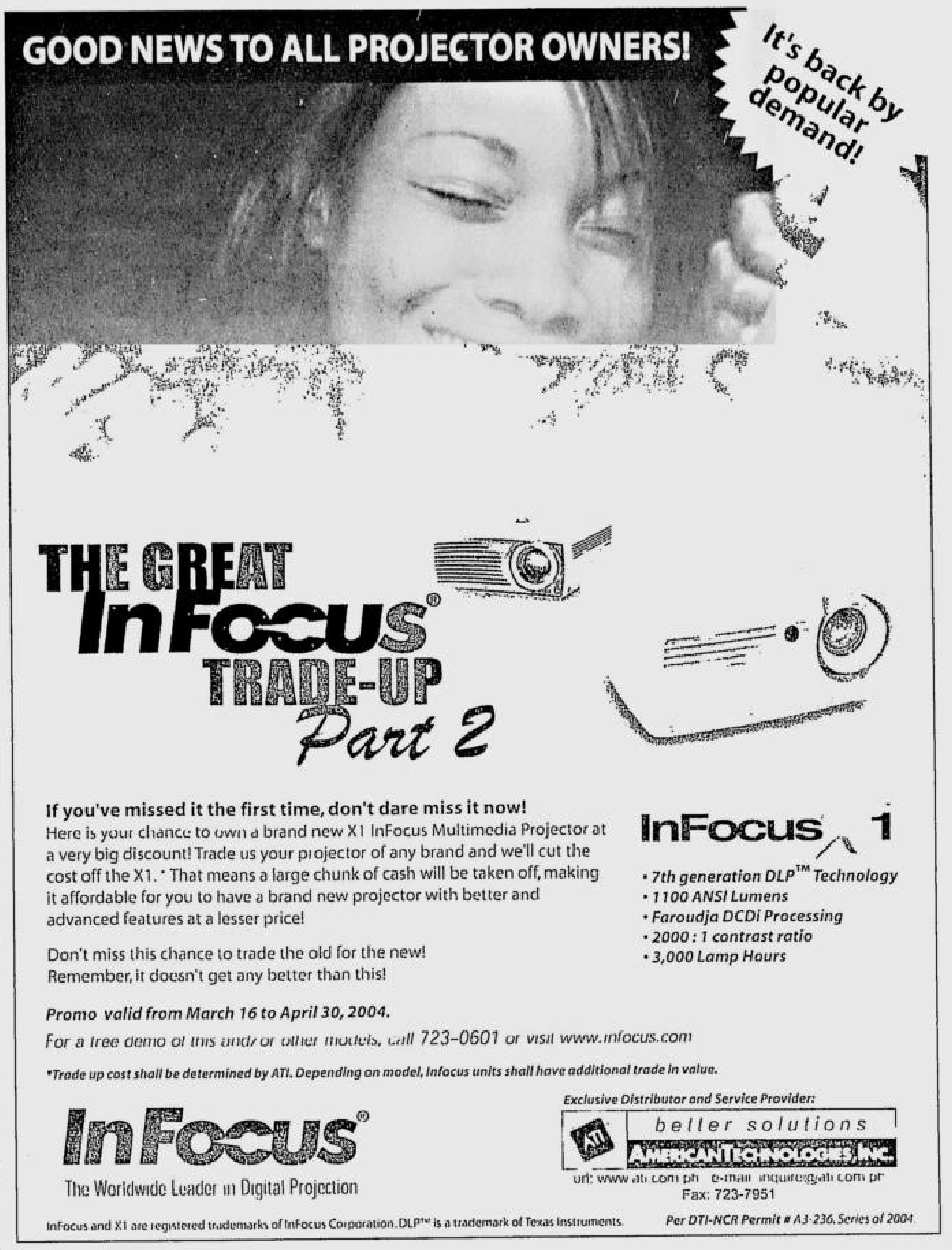
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Editor **Leo Magno**

Another shop raided for illegal computer games

By Erwin Lemuel G. Oliva

PHILIPPINE authorities raided an Internet shop in Pangasinan after it allegedly ignored warnings to stop offering illegal computer game titles by Vivendi Universal Games.

In behalf of Vivendi Universal, local distributor Asian Media Development Group filed a complaint with the National Bureau of Investigation that eventually led to Friday's raid of the Internet shop "Disc Net" in Dagupan City.

Gerry Castro, vice president for marketing of AMDG, said around 14 personal computers were seized.

An industry source in Dagupan City also confirmed the raid of the local Internet shop.

Through local authorities, AMDG began its clampdown on Internet shops offering illegal or "unlicensed" game titles after they signed a contract with Vivendi Universal in 2002.

So far, close to 30 shops have been raided due to complaints from AMDG since it became a distributor of Vivendi Universal game titles, according to Castro.

"We've been conducting raids in the coun-

ANOTHER/ B15

CA chief resigns, local official says RP operations unaffected

By Alexander F. Villafania

COMPUTER Associates CEO Sanjay Kumar, facing pressure from a federal accounting probe, has resigned from his post. Kumar, who resigned from the board of directors of the business software group, was named chief software architect, a new position.

The move came as the company was seeking to resolve a federal criminal probe as well as an investigation by regulators into accounting practices.

Last week, the firm said it sacked nine employees in its legal and finance departments after an internal investigation by its board's audit committee.

However, Kumar is not being indicted in relation to the alleged accounting fraud.

The resignation of Kumar would have no effect on CA's operations in the Philippines, according to local officials.

Following Kumar's resignation, CA announced new changes that were declared by its audit committee. Among these changes are the appointment of Lewis Ranieri as chair of CA's board of directors, and also the launch of its search for a new CEO.

In a statement, Ranieri said the company was happy about Kumar's assumption of the new chief software architect position, acknowledging his expertise and experience in CA's business. He, however, said that Kumar's resignation was not based on the assumptions of any wrongdoing.

Ranieri also said that the company's latest decisions "are fair and responsive to the situation and in the best interests of CA's customers, shareholders and employees."

The federal investigation gained momentum earlier this month, when three former executives pleaded guilty to charges of obstruction and securities fraud.

The company has acknowledged that it "prematurely" recognized revenue in fiscal 2000 on the basis of software li-

CA/ B15

Full speed ahead with 'Need for Speed: Underground'

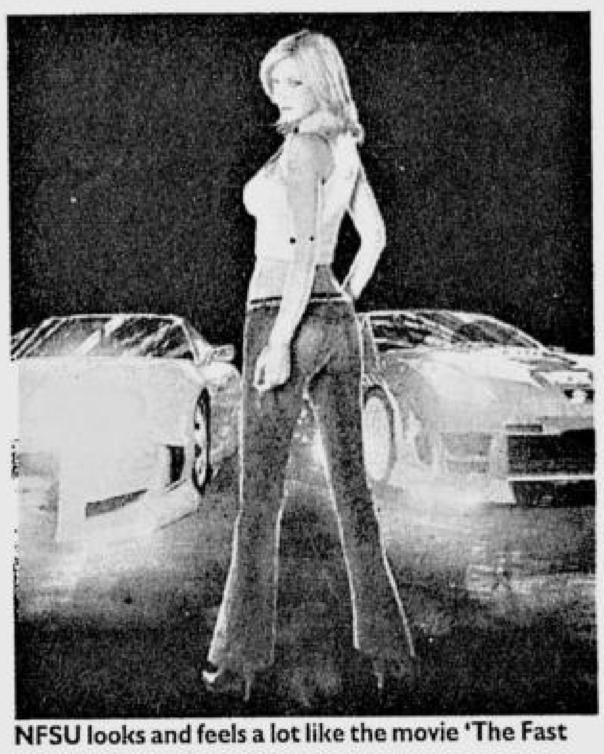
By Alexander F. Villafania

FOLLOWING the success of its Need for Speed (NFS) series, EA Games recently came out with an updated NFS game that is, coincidentally, similar to the concept of the sleeper hit movie "The Fast and the Furious."

"Need for Speed: Underground" (NFSU), like the movie, features import car street racing and modifications. And believe me when I say that the game is as fast as it is furious (pardon the pun).

It's a welcome treat that NFSU has featured mostly Japanese street cars—like those we usually see on our streets—since previous NFS editions used mostly American and European thoroughbreds. The roster includes the Ford Focus, the Dodge Neon, the Volkswagen Golf, the Honda Civic and S200, the Peugeot 206 GTi, the Mitsubishi Lancer and Eclipse, the Toyota Supra and Celica, the Hyundai Tiburon, the Subaru Impreza, the Nissan Sentra and 240SX, and the Mazda Miata (which I always thought was a cheap look-alike of the BMW Roadster).

All of the cars in NFSU can be upgraded with hundreds of aftermarket parts which can be grouped in two categories: visual and performance. The former includes dozens of mean-looking replacements for the hood, spoiler, sideskirts, bumpers, mag wheels and roof scoops. And true to the form of "The Fast and the Furious," your car of choice can be painted and decorated with up to four layers of vinyl designs.



NFSU looks and feels a lot like the movie 'The Fast and the Furious'

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GAME ON THE PC

The performance category focuses on what's under the car: weight reduction kits, nitrous oxide, brake calipers, ECU, turbo kits, among other enhancements. Changes made to these parts have a significant impact on your car's operation during a race. My own favorite enhancement is the nitrous oxide. Using this during a race pumps up the car's acceleration. There's a speed-motion effect on the screen that makes you feel like your car is going on a Star Trek-like time warp.

To obtain or "unlock" the various parts for upgrades, though, you have to progress through 111 races when playing the game's single player "Underground" mode. During the course of Underground,

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E-load may open new era in money history

By Dennis M. Arroyo
Contributor

KING Croesus of ancient Lydia. Emperor Augustus Caesar of Rome. Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II of Sicily. Heart Evangelista of ABS-CBN. These are the faces that mark milestones in the history of money. Well, the last name is a stretch, but look out, e-load is a greater phenomenon than it seems.

Coins in the realm

Here's how we got to our current form of money. The kings of ancient Lydia standardized the metal pieces used for trade. They bore the face of the king as a seal of quality control: they were the first coins. The Romans in turn put the mug of Caesar in coins used throughout the empire.

Later on medieval goldsmiths stored the precious metals in vaults. They would stock the gold for a fee, and kept records and receipts. Town folk paid each other in coins of gold and other metals. Ye olde gambler would pay gold coins for his bets over a fight involving ye olde version of Manny Pacquiao.

Paper currency

But such payment involved the hassle of retrieving the metal. Eventually people paid each other via the receipts for the gold. The receipts or bills circulated as money. These notes were based on trust, or so-called fiduciary money. The Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II of Sicily was among the first to issue state fiduciary money.

Then the goldsmiths learned that the amount of gold in their vaults did not have to match the bills they issued. For people did not withdraw their gold all at the same time. But to be careful, they made sure to keep a reserve of gold. For example, the money circulating should not be more than 5 times the gold in the vault. Those were the origins of fractional reserve banking.

Checking accounts came to be. The notes indicated a transfer of funds from one person or account to another.

At first, Europe was on the gold standard: its paper currency was backed by gold in state vaults. The United States and the rest of the world eventually broke free from the gold standard. You can't go to Bangko Sentral and exchange your pesos for its corresponding gold.

Electronic transfers

Credit cards, travelers' checks and gift certificates arose as innovations that closely resembled currency.

Then came telegraphic transfers. Huge sums of money could be shifted across the seas by signals sent over cables. This morphed into today's electronic transfers and Internet payments.

E-load emerges

Now comes the phenomenon of e-load, whose poster girl is Heart Evangelista. Smart Communications correctly called it the first of its kind in the world. (Globe's version is called Autoload Max.) Formerly you would load your mobile by buying phone cards or going to the ATM. Today your friends can pass on their cell load to you, and the amount sent can sink to loose change.

The Philippines has 22 million cell phone users. Being by far the text capital of the world, she is known as the world's prime laboratory of innovation in texting. The great array of promos and services we take for granted are not all available in the US, Europe, or Japan. The developed countries would do well to observe how electronic loads evolve here.

Buying goods and services

Passing loads in exchange for physical goods will likely take off among the youth. One teenager passes to a classmate her load in exchange for a magazine. Another buys a CD. An entire barkada pools its loads to get a second-hand guitar. I have a friend named Bogs who, short on change, thought of paying his fare by passing his load to the driver.

Now, consider that the big telecom companies have many tie-ups with real-world goods and services. Mobile banking is no longer science fiction. Smart has its Smart Money linked with MasterCard. Globe's GenTxt card caters to the needs and tastes of the youth. Big business is already making inroads into e-load. For example, Globe subscribers can buy their load cards at Jollibee and get free burgers and fries.

New form of currency

I thus theorize that e-load will grow as a means of shifting cash from person to person. It will seep deeper into the world of buying goods and services. The trick is to lengthen the expiry dates of the loads— to 30 days is not enough. Cash, after all, does not expire, save for wear and tear.

Maybe in less than five years e-load can mutate into digital currency. At the supermarket, Filipinos may be reaching for their cell phones like they reach for their wallets. Pioneered in the Philippines, the e-load habit will spread to countries where Filipinos are found. And that means the whole world.

Comments to darroyo @ philonline.com

Know the new law on arbitration of commercial disputes

By Raul Palabrica

Part I

ARBITRATION has gained wide acceptance in the international business community as a cost-effective way of settling commercial disputes.

Resort to judicial processes for the same purpose can be time consuming and expensive, especially if the lawyers are paid by the clock. This is true not only in the Philippines but also in other countries that use the adversarial system in court proceedings.

The favorite choices for arbitration venue are Hong Kong, Singapore, New York and Paris. These financial capitals are known for their sophisticated arbitration techniques.

Except for Executive Order No. 1008, also known as the Construction Industry Arbitration law (which was issued in 1986 when then President Cory Aquino had law-making powers), there are no clear and well-defined arbitration rules in our country that Filipino and foreign businessmen can rely on for the non-judicial resolution of commercial disagreements.

This void is sought to be filled by Republic Act 9285, or the "Alternative Dispute Resolution Act of 2004," which was recently enacted into law.

The law promotes the use of Alternative Dispute Resolution, such as, mediation, conciliation and arbitration, for the speedy and impartial dispensation of justice and to ease the backlog in court dockets.

Model law

For commercial disputes that involve parties coming from different countries, the law states that their arbitration shall be governed by the Model Law on International Commercial Arbitration that was adopted by the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL) on June 21, 1985. A copy of the Model Law is attached to RA 9285 as an appendix.

The Model Law, which took more than two decades to complete, aims to improve and harmonize the national laws on arbitration and, in the process, facilitate cross-border or international business transactions.

Consisting of eight chapters, the Model Law spells out the essential elements of an arbitration agreement, the composition and jurisdiction of the arbitral tribunal, the conduct of the arbitral proceedings, and enforcement of the tribunal's award.

An arbitration is considered "commercial" if it covers matters arising from all relationships of a commercial nature, whether contractual or not. Examples of relationships of a commercial nature are transactions for the supply or exchange of goods and services, distribution agreements, construction of works, commercial representation and joint ventures.

Representation

If the arbitration is conducted in the Philippines, RA 9285 allows any party to be represented by any person of his choice, without regard to that party's nationality or place of residence.

Unless that representative is allowed to practice law in the Philippines, he is not authorized to appear as counsel in any local court, or any other quasi-judicial body even if such appearance is in relation to the arbitration in which he appears. The restriction is intended to prevent foreign lawyers from taking away business from Filipino lawyers.

To encourage the use of arbitration in the resolution of commercial disputes, the law has declared as confidential the arbitration proceedings, including the records, evidence and award.

Any information relating to the arbitration can be made public only if the parties agree to their disclosure or for the limited purpose of disclosing to the court relevant documents in the cases where resort to the courts is permitted.

But recourse to His Honor is not going to be easy. It can only be invoked if it is an interim measure aimed at preventing irreparable loss or injury to a party and the arbitral tribunal has no power to act or is unable to act effectively on the requested protective action.

Outside of this situation, the law keeps the courts away from the picture and lets the arbitration proceedings go the way the parties may have envisioned in their arbitration agreement.

Advantages

With the adoption of the Model Law as the yardstick for the conduct of international commercial arbitration in the Philippines, Filipino and foreign businessmen need not look elsewhere for arbitration rules to apply in case of disagreements in the interpretation of their contracts.

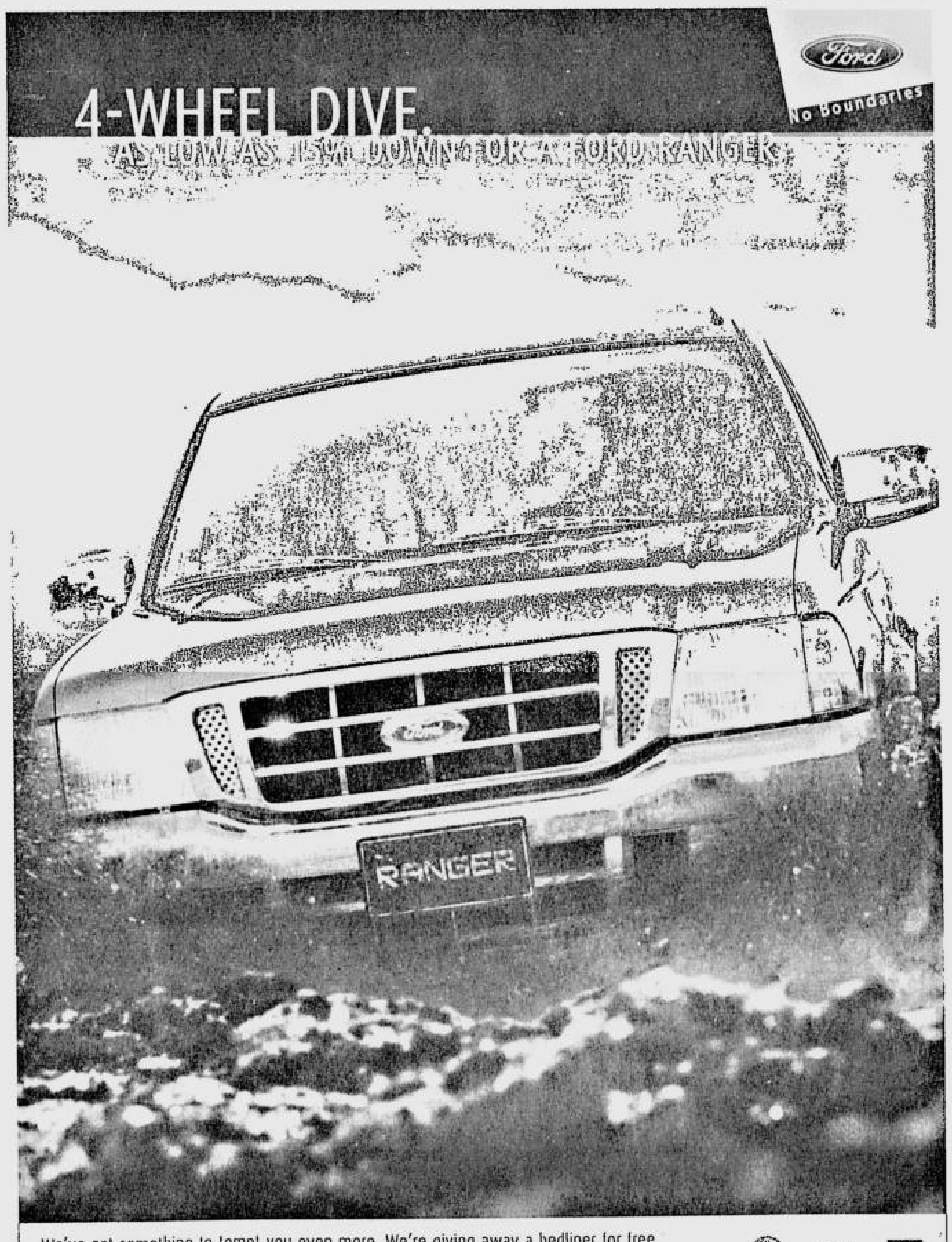
The Model Law is a product of the collective efforts of the world's top commercial experts. It has the imprimatur of the United Nations. And most of all, it is simple and easy to follow. In case any its provisions is unclear to the contracting parties, the covering report of the UNCITRAL's Secretary General is available for reference and guidance.

By granting "legal and official" accreditation to the Model Law, RA 9285 has partly eased the concern of foreign businessmen about the integrity of arbitration proceedings conducted in the country.

The ground rules on the arbitration of international commercial disputes are now clearly defined. The legality of the application of an international covenant, the Model Law, to a domestic transaction has been confirmed. There will be less reason to worry about judges unduly poking their fingers in the settlement of commercial disputes between businessmen.

Under these circumstances, foreign businessmen can reasonably expect to get a fair deal if they agree to enter into arbitration to resolve their differences with their Filipino counterpart.

(Next week, recognition and enforcement of arbitral awards.)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"9 lives"

MAPPING THE FUTURE

By Helen P. Macasaet

THE 9 Lives of Luis "Chavit" Singson is the first biography ever to be published about the man famous for blowing the whistle on President Joseph "Erap" Estrada. As the title suggests, the book presents Chavit as a man who narrowly escaped death many times throughout his political career.

The book is relatively easy to read. The author, Linda C. Limpe uses an offhanded conversational style to sustain the reader's interest while at the same time providing rich historical detail. Indeed, the book's strength is the extensive research that went into its production. It contains not only actual accounts from Chavit himself, but also from people who knew him as well as from other publications.

Not a fence sitter

The text is imbued with the author's personal inferences that smooth away debatable aspects of Chavit's personality. For example, in the chapter on Chavit's women, Limpe presents monogamy as an unrealistic ideal for a man in his position. She reasons that polygamy, aside from being a common characteristic of powerful politicians, is also deeply embedded in Oriental culture to begin with. One may find the logic contradictory to Chavit's message at the beginning of the book, where he describes himself as one who was never known to take the easy way out. In any case, such a pronouncement on a controversial moral issue may be a pill difficult to swallow by some readers.

Yet another observation on the book is that it is more geared to the Philippine readership. Limpe often uses the terms "us" and "we" to refer to herself and the Filipino people. Foreign readers may find the collective Filipino tone uninviting, as it reads more like propaganda material rather than a valuable source of local vignettes.

Matters of fact

When one focuses on the facts, however, the book is food for thought. It begins by taking the reader back in time to early Ilocos. The prominent Singson clan is then introduced, and the reader is catapulted into the world of bloody Ilocano politics and shady presidential administrations. Initially a businessman in the tobacco trade, Chavit entered politics when corruption began crippling the industry. He wrested power from the Crisologos, relatives of his who were also the reigning political rivals. When he became a congressman, he authored RA 7171, which provided Ilocos with funds for infrastructure and development. Disputes over the funds were apparently what caused the rift between Chavit and Erap.

The bigger picture

Chavit hoped that his biography would serve as an inspiration for the youth to fight for truth and justice. One wonders, however, what kind of truth and justice is Chavit referring to? The *jueteng* scandal mentioned in the book proves that Chavit is not a squeaky-clean politician. But his story is worth listening to, for it is a testament to how politics and business are tightly intertwined. Whether in government or in corporate management, a responsible leader knows that the effects of corruption are far-reaching. It will ultimately be to the detriment of all if one contributes to the corrupt practices, or worse, pretends ignorance and allows it to continue.

"Pocketing" by government officials, substandard quality projects being completed, and the funding of projects not based on the country's needs but based on personal and political interests—the laundry list is growing—these are the chains that keep a developing country like ours, ever "developing." Never to mature. We are like our own undernourished and stunted children whose guardians, however, remain "fatcats" but are never satiated.

Over the past decades, the Philippine economy has undergone countless beatings. It may well be that its nine lives are nearing their end. It will only take a few more generations of corruption to pull the cord and kill the cat.

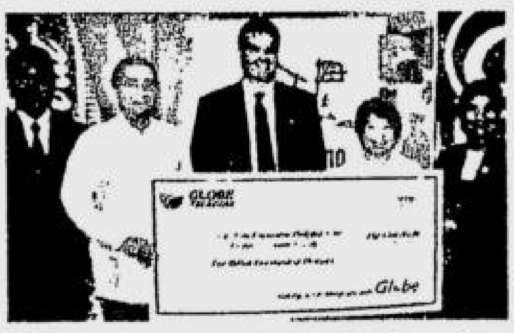
What has been done to the Philippines in the past cannot be undone. The challenge now is not to turn back the hands of time but to be proactive. Broad statements about abstract ideals alone aren't going to work. In order to elicit change, concrete plans and measures are needed.

It is easy for politicians to be socially ignorant and be entirely without conscience, regardless of events effecting Juan de la Cruz, especially the coming elections on May 10. But it is not so for businessmen who depend directly on the market to survive.

Juan de la Cruz does not have 9 lives.

It's up to us now.

(The article reflects the personal opinion of the author. The author is president of Pentathlon IT Asia and co-chair of the MAP ICT Committee. Feedback at mapsec@globenet.com.ph)



GLOBE Telecom president & CEO Gerardo Ablaza (2nd from left) presents the symbolic check for P2.5 million as its contribution to the Little Red Schoolhouse Project. Photo shows (from left) Globe Telecom Wireless Business head Ferdinand de la Cruz, The Coca-Cola Company Philippines Division president Alex von Behr, Coca-Cola Foundation Philippines president Cecile Alcantara and Coca-Cola Bottlers Philippines Inc. VP and corporate affairs director Mila Llorin.

Firms raise ₱7.9 M for 'red schools'

TULAY Talino, a fundraising partnership between leading names in commerce and industry, has raised P7.9 million to build more elementary schoolhouses in the country's isolated barangays.

The fundraising initiative involves Coca-Cola, Globe Telecom, GMA 7 and Standard Chartered Bank. It benefits the flagship Little Red Schoolhouse Project of the Coca-Cola Foundation Philippines Inc. (CCFPI), which has already built 55 "Little Red Schoolhouses" in Luzon, the Visayas and Mindanao.

Tulay Talino was formally launched in May 2003 with the Coca-Cola Golf Classic, a one-day invitational event that raised P1.8 million. A concerted fundraising effort followed with Globe Telecom's text-based "Fanzone" campaign, Standard Chartered Bank credit card donations and GMA 7, which contributed media airtime for advocacy ads to broaden consumer awareness.

Coca-Cola employees also voluntarily pledged a portion of their salaries to Tulay Talino, with The Coca-Cola Company Philippines Division and Coca-Cola Bottlers Philippines Inc. pledging four pesos for every peso donated by a Coca-Cola employee.

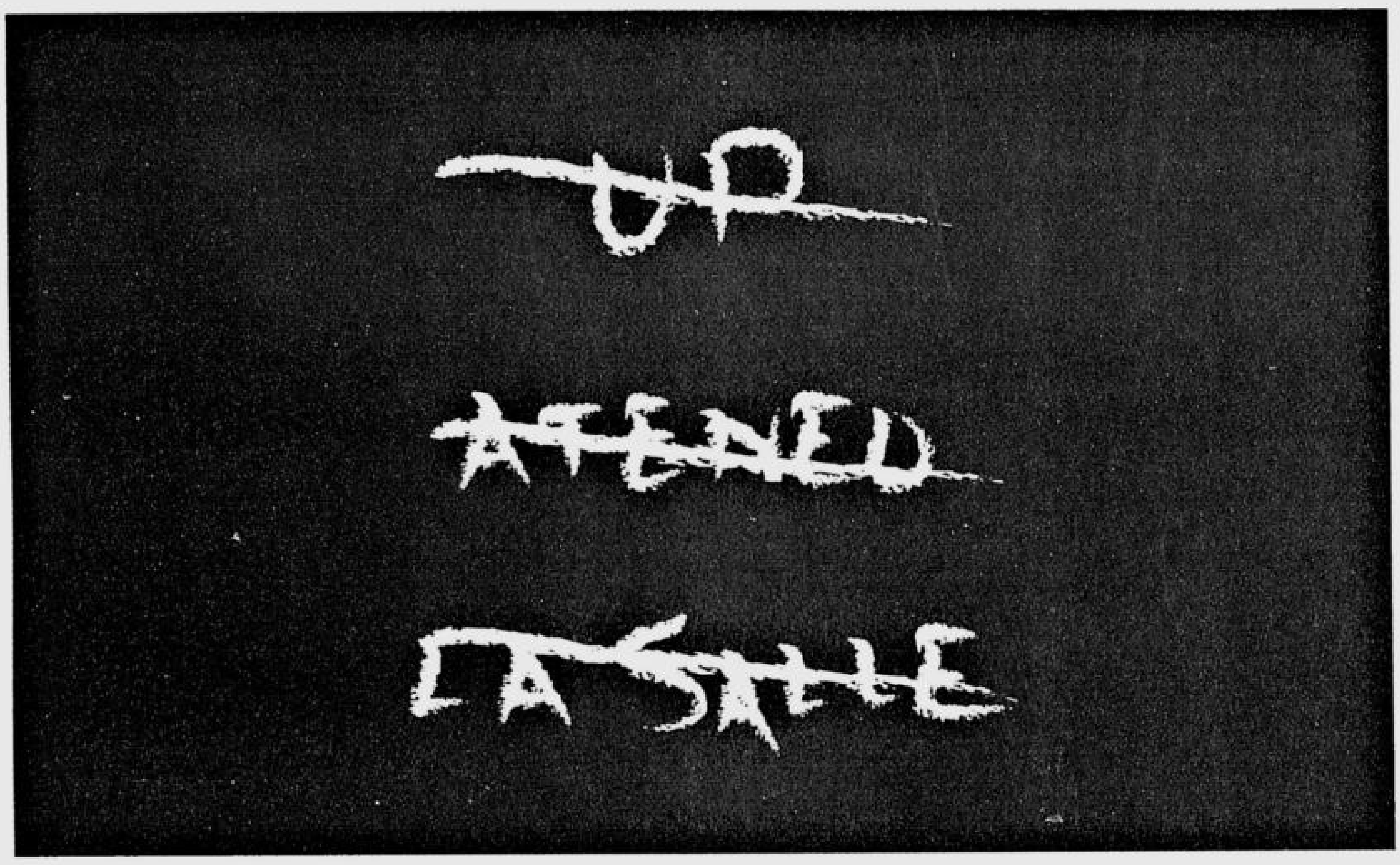
"Providing underprivileged children access to good education has always been a priority among Globe's corporate social responsibility initiatives," said Globe Telecom president & CEO Gerardo Ablaza, who recently turned over P2.5 million to CCFPI as Globe's donation to the program. "With more projects of this kind, we can continue to make great things possible for Filipino children."

"A fundamental obligation of modern business leadership is to give back to the communities that have made our successes possible," said Alex von Behr, Coca-Cola Foundation Philippines vice chair and The Coca-Cola Company Philippines Division president. "Tulay Talino has provided that opportunity, not only for Coca-Cola but also for like-minded organizations such as Globe Telecom. We are delighted to have such partners as we move forward with the Little Red Schoolhouse Project."

The Little Red Schoolhouse Project was launched in 1997 as a response to government's call for private sector support for public education. The program has so far provided permanent three-classroom school buildings ("Little Red Schoolhouses") with essential classroom equipment to 55 existing elementary schools nationwide.

Each Little Red Schoolhouse costs about P1.4 million, with the schools turned over to the Department of Education and the local community after completion. All have been particularly designed for the multi-grade method of teaching, where two or three grade levels are taught simultaneously by the same teacher. The method is endorsed by Unicef as the most cost-effective way of providing primary education to as many schoolchildren as possible.

Ongoing training is also provided for educators on the special skills needed for teaching multi-grade classes. To date, over 10,000 pupils, 321 teachers and school supervisors, and 2,000 parents and community members have benefited directly from the Little Red Schoolhouse Project.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How to act in a cocktail party honoring you

GOODNESS GRACES

Lia S. Bernardo

Q: My husband and I have to attend a function sponsored by his company. Is it okay for me to ask if I can bring my sister who is visiting from the US? She is going to be our house guest during that time and I do not want her to stay home alone.

A: The answer depends on the type of function you are attending. If it is a general event sponsored by your company such as a fashion show, concert or the like then it would be perfectly acceptable for you to take your sister along, provided that you inform those planning the event or those in charge of the event ahead of time. If it is a cocktail or a dinner function I would advise that you do not take your sister. If the event is exclusive to your husband's company and only a selected few are invited then it would be inappropriate for you to take someone else along, but if it is a big event where there will be several people present who also do not belong to the company, then it would be appropriate to bring someone along.

Q: My cousin's law firm is hosting a cocktail party in honor of their new partners, one of whom is my cousin. He is a bit anxious about how he should behave during the party. Could you please give us some tips?

A: What your cousin needs to remember is that he is one of the guests of honor in this function. As such, it is also his responsibility to mingle and introduce himself to colleagues and clients. A simple rule of thumb is to practice proper call card etiquette and introductions. I have written on this topic several times but here are some points to guide you:

- The internationally accepted way of presenting a calling card is to first make sure that the card is facing upward with your name facing the recipient
- When receiving a calling card you must read it
- You must not keep the card immediately upon receiving it or upon reading it
- For as long as you are in conversation with the person, the card should remain visible, face up, and only kept once the conversation has ended
- Always keep your calling cards in a card case. This saves you the awkwardness of having to pull out your wallet and search for your card
- When making introductions always mention the name of the person with the highest rank first.
- Clients are always given the highest rank

E-mail business etiquette queries to etiquetteconsultants@hotmail.com, names of senders will not be published.

Top execs at leadership forum

"LEADERSHIP in Governance" was the topic of Standard Chartered Bank's CEO Leadership Forum that recently drew together presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye and Finance Secretary Juanita Amatong.

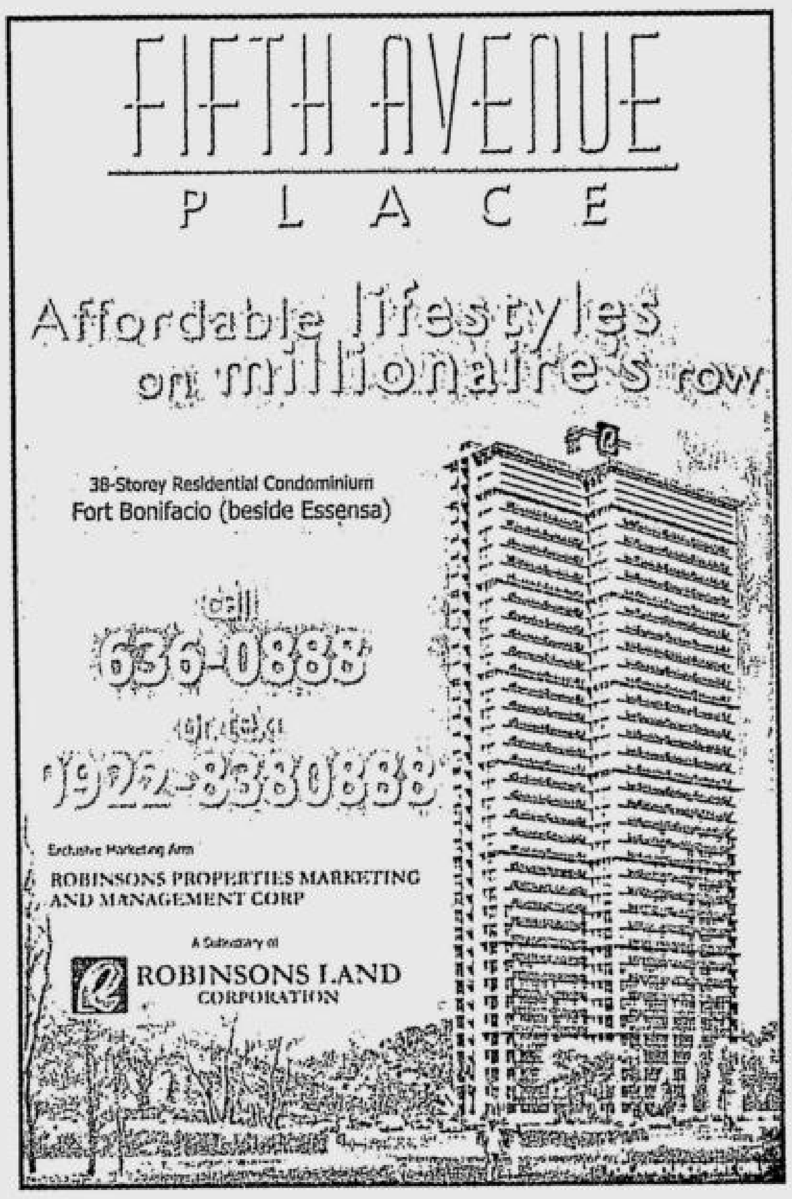
The Leadership Forum is a regular professional development forum of senior executives of UK-based Standard Chartered Bank Philippines, aimed to gather movers and shakers of various sectors of society.

Highlighting Bunye's talk was a definition of leadership qualities which are personified by President Macapagal-Arroyo. These are intelligence, excellent work ethic, boundless energies, decisiveness, hands-on management and being totally in command.

Amatong emphasized two major leadership areas where the government is solidly committed to, and which are relevant to the banking sector—sound financial politics that will augur financial reforms and the efficient management of the budget deficit.

SCB CEO Simon Morris, mover of the Leadership Forum, made this comment: We're very happy with the presence of two outstanding government leaders in the forum. The key messages they have imparted are most relevant, as the bank is committed in the Philippines as a long-time advisor. The twinbill appearance of the two Cabinet members is a vote of confidence for Standard Chartered Bank, and a strong signal of the government's genuine intention to strengthen relations with the private sector for the country's economic well-being."

FROM left are Zeny Iglesias, head of Corporate Affairs, Marivel Gonzales, head of Legal and Compliance, CEO Simon Morris, Secretary Juanita Amatong, presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye, Caesar Parlade, head of Finance and Mike Aguilar, head of Global Markets.



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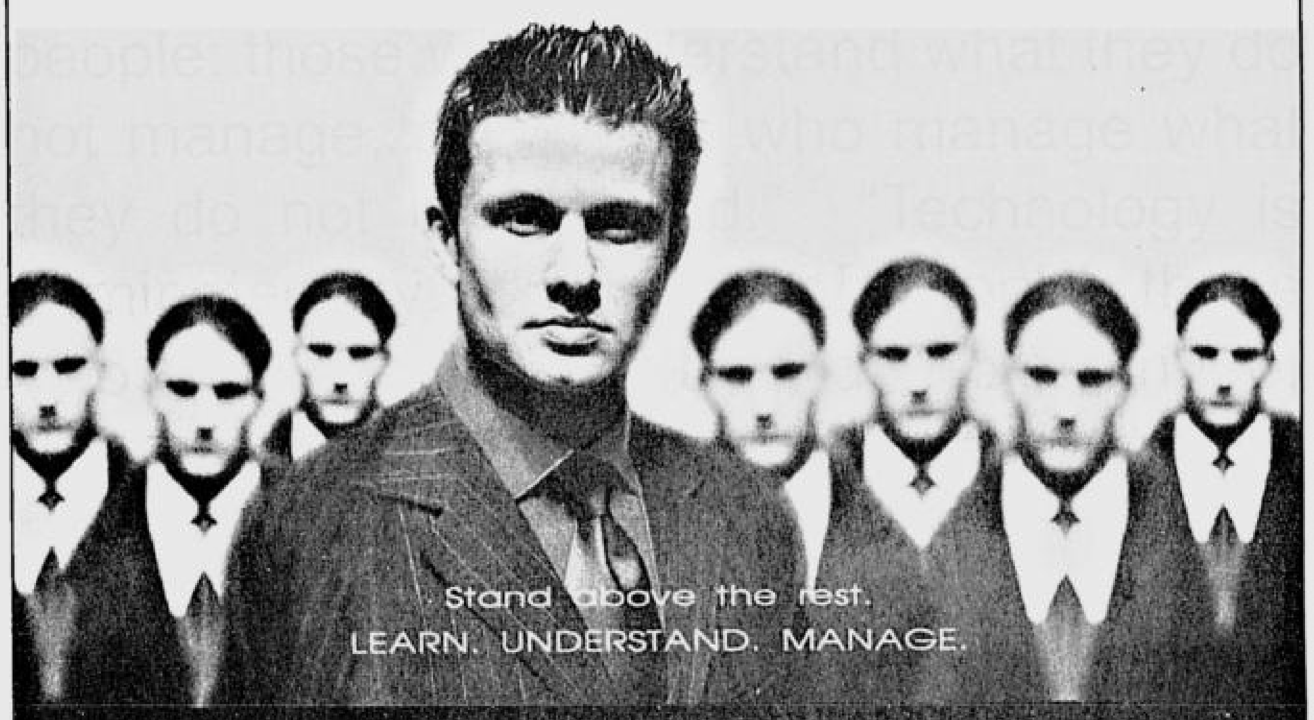
"Technology is dominated by two types of people: those who understand what they do not manage, and those who manage what they do not understand."



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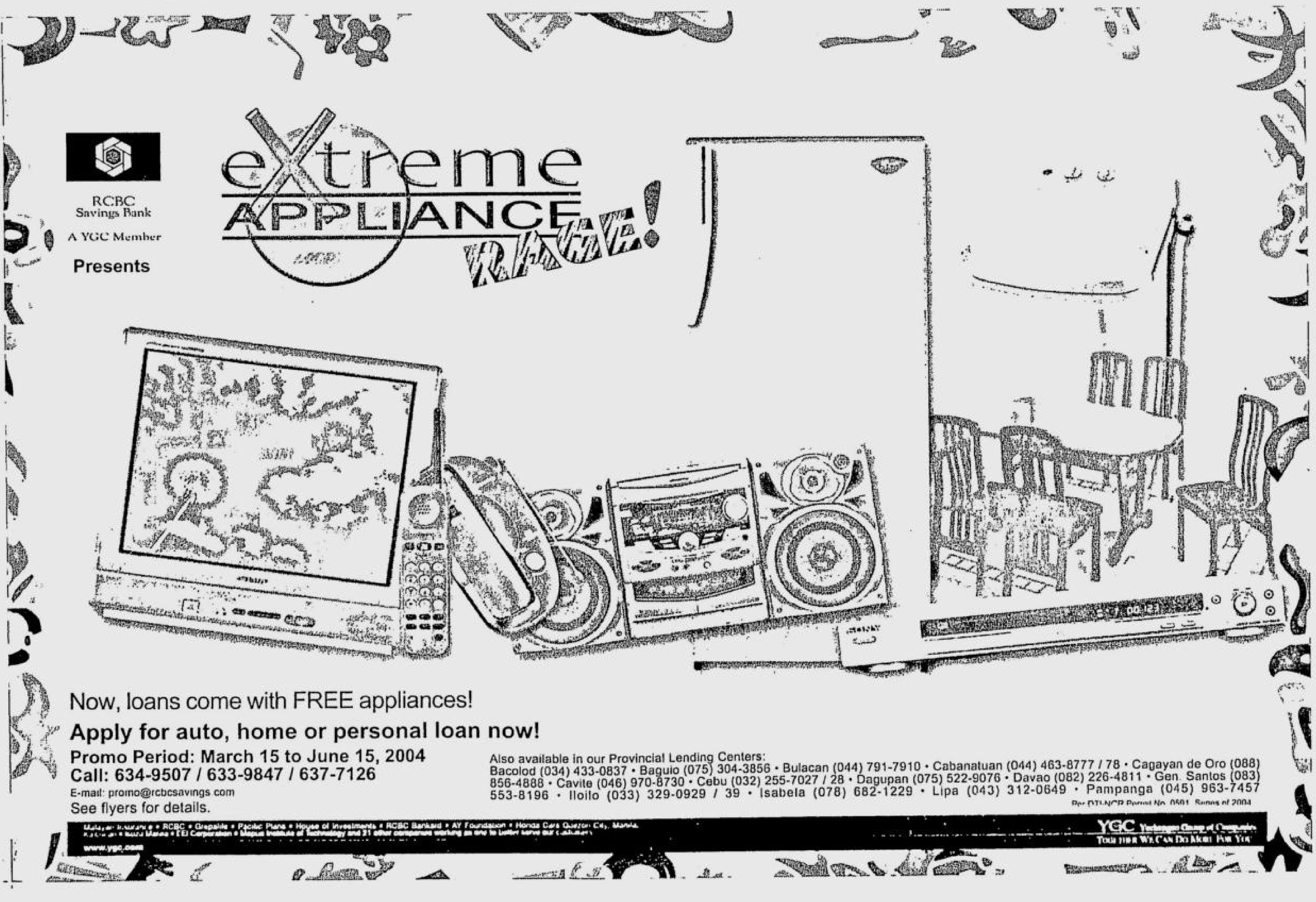

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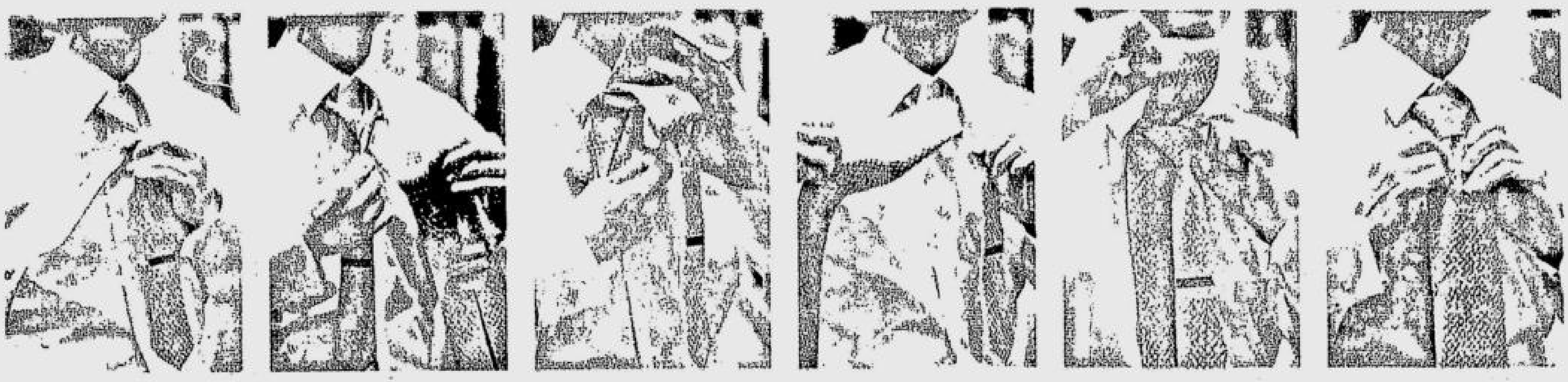


Four-in-Hand Knot

1. Cross long end over short end.
2. Bring long end under short end.
3. Bring long end over front.
4. Bring long end up through neck-band.
5. Bring long end down through knot.
6. The complete knot.

PHOTOS BY ROMY HOMILLADA

Choosing the right one and 'tie-ing' the knots properly

EXECUTIVES wear this long ribbon-like thing daily. You can get one for a dollar; but you can also get some for a thousand dollar.

Yet many CEOs still struggle occasionally with those knots.

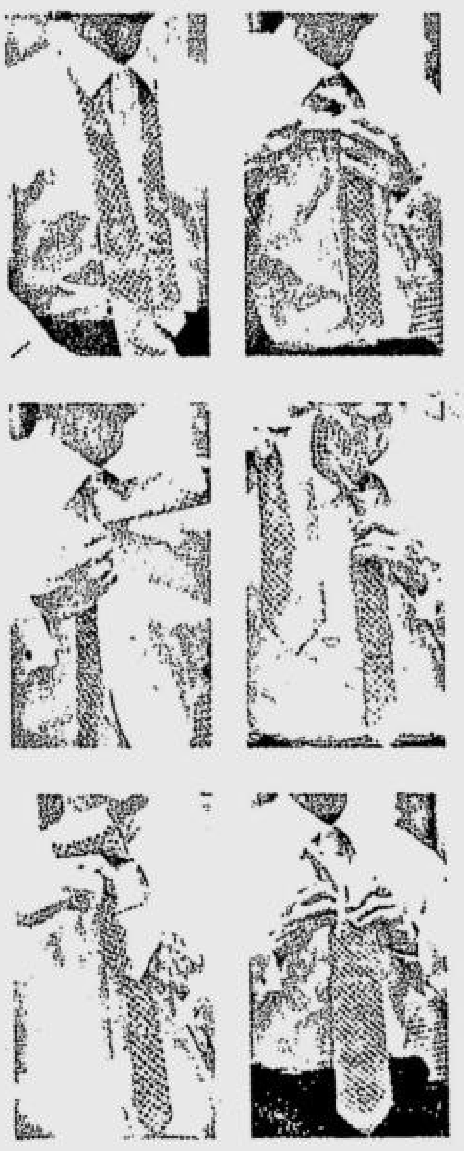
In choosing a tie, fashion experts advise to simply choose a print that attracts you most, take it off the rack, and figure out how you can match it to your wardrobe.

Business Monday asked Mario Katigbak, Bvlgari's country manager in the Philippines, a necktie buff, to share some of his personal tips on choosing a tie and tying it properly.

His tie of choice would of course be Bvlgari, with its signature seven folds, which can be found in its latest collection at the new store in Greenbelt 4, Ayala Center, Makati City.

"The most important thing for ties is that they knot well," he explains. "The traditional British way of creating seven-fold ties gives the tie a solid knot, and makes it solid throughout. This accounts for its fall being solid and its not twisting much. Other details that make a difference for Bvlgari ties are that they are hand-stitched, and undergo a 12-shade screening process, which gives the fabric its rich color and sheen."

To give corporate men more ideas about neckties, Bvlgari shares three ways of tying a tie, namely Four-in-Hand, Half-Windsor, and Windsor. *(refer to photos)*



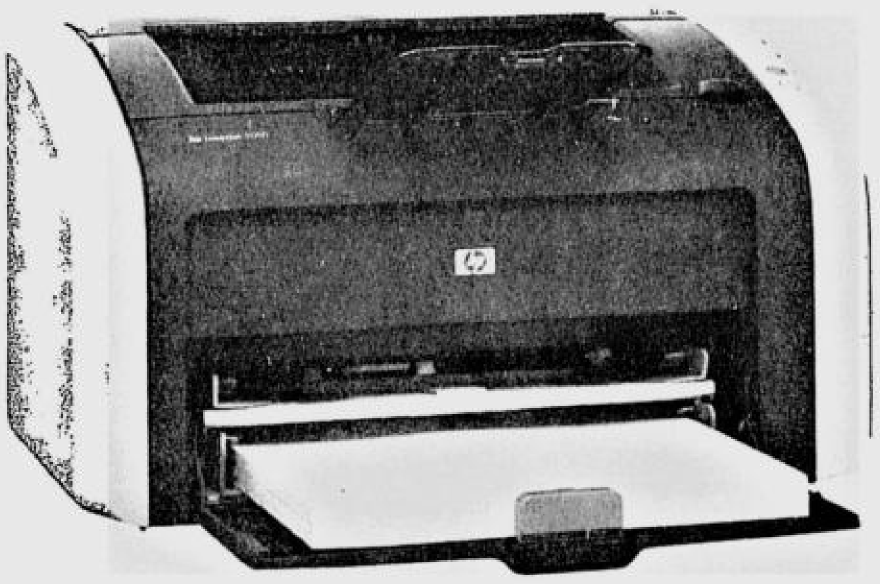
Half-Windsor Knot:

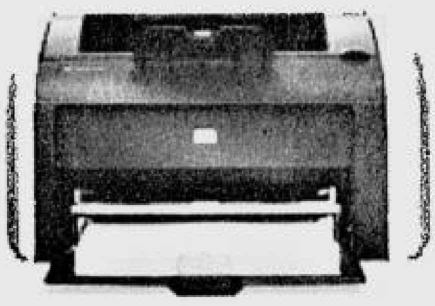
1. The tie's wide end should be over a foot below the narrow end. Cross it over the narrow end and bring it back underneath.
2. Take up the wide end and wind it once through the loop from front to back.
3. Now pass the wide end of the tie across the front of the knot and bring it through the loop again before passing it down through the front of the knot. Finally, slowly tighten the knot as you draw it up the collar.
4. Slide the completed knot in place.

Windsor Knot:

1. Start with the wide end of the tie on the right and over a foot below the narrow end. Cross the wide end over the narrow end, and bring up through the loop.
2. Bring the wide end down, then around behind the narrow end up on your right. Put the wide end down through the loop and around across the narrow end.
3. Turn the wide end and pass it up through the loop.
4. Slip the wide end down through the knot. Tighten the knot and draw it snug to the collar.
5. Complete knot with center crease just below knot.

SILK NECKTIES BY BVLGARI





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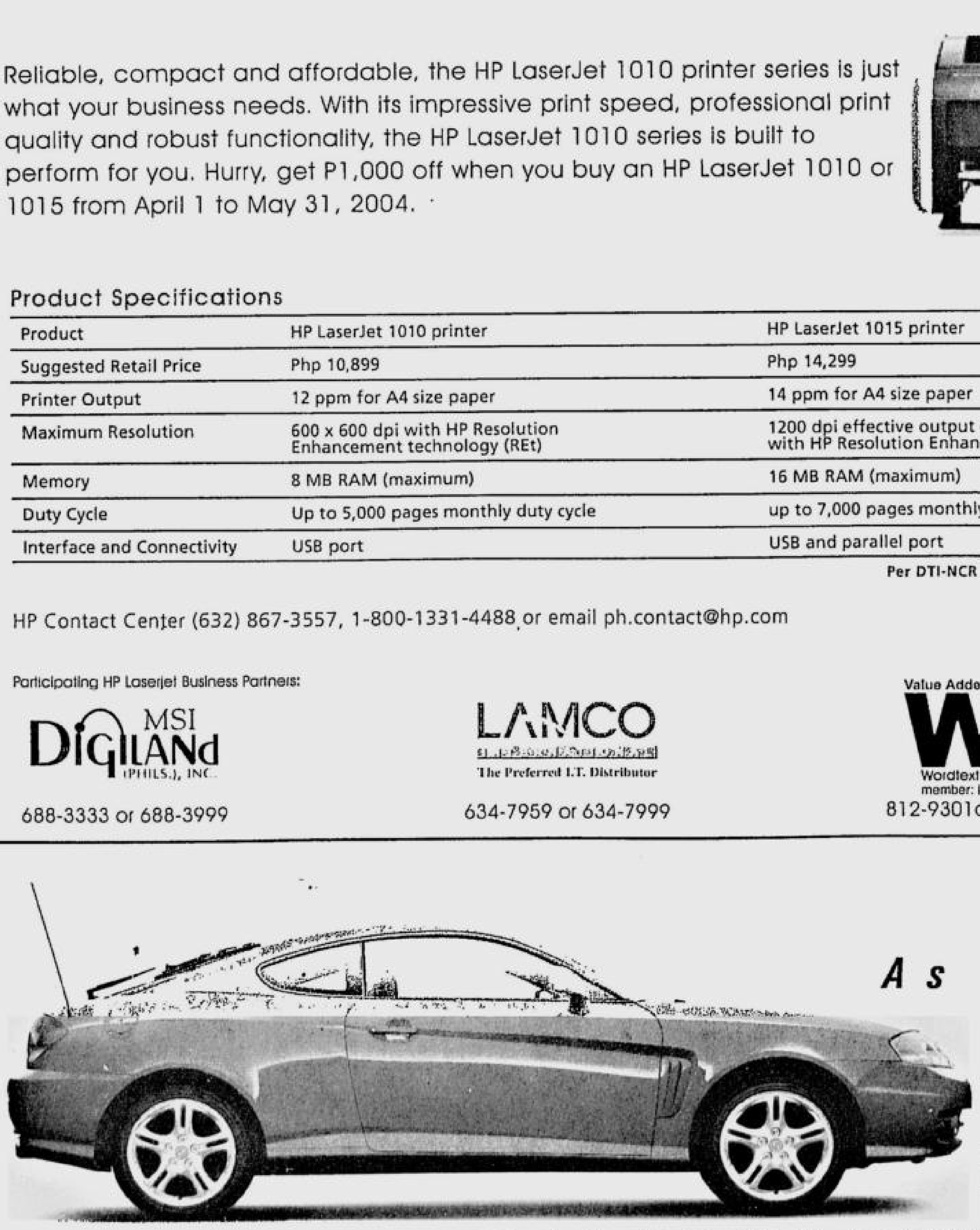

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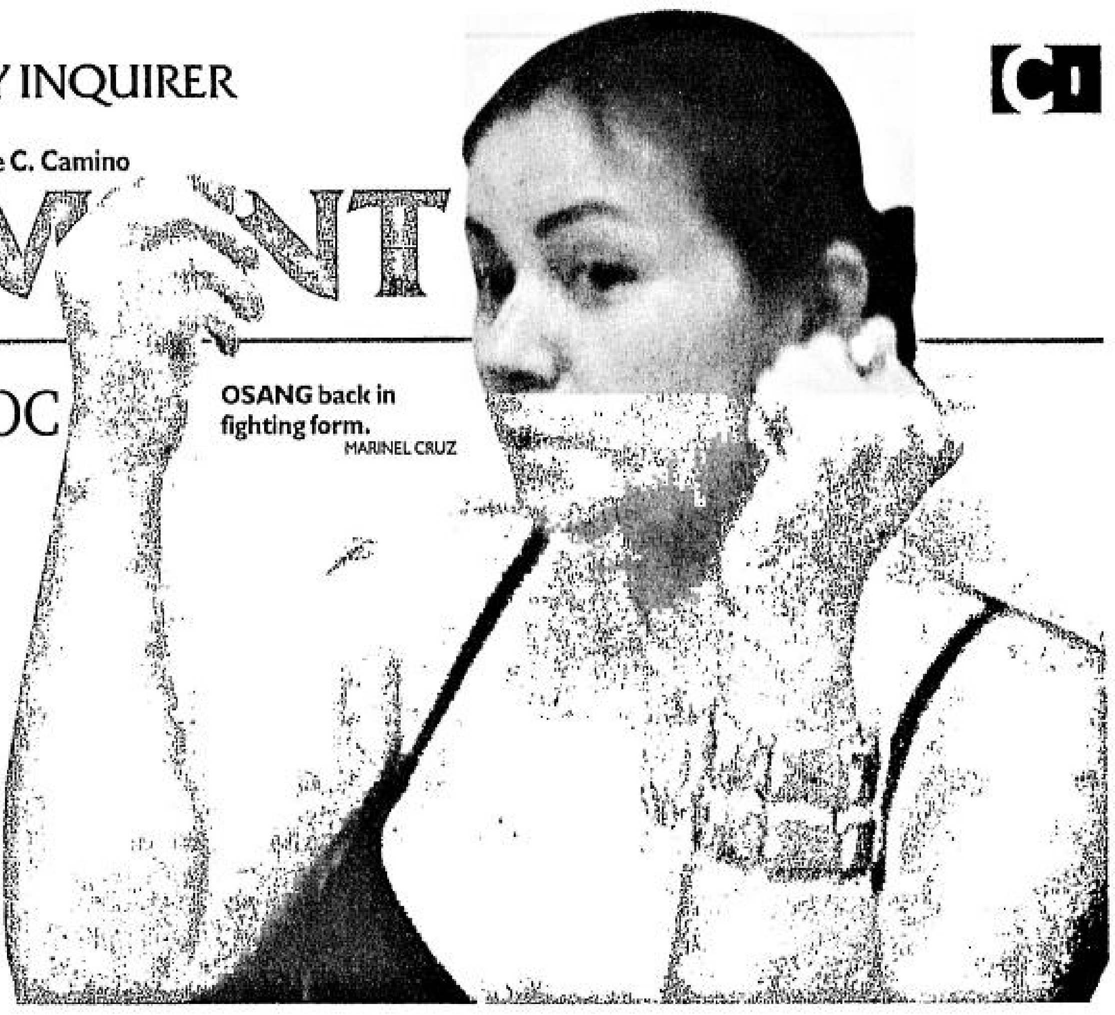

OSANG back in fighting form. MARINEL CRUZ

BELO'S EX-PAL NOW ALL PRAISES FOR RIVAL DOC

Osang threatens to spill all vs 'Flawless' centers

By Nini Valera

THERE'S a new Rosanna Roces—again. And she's threatening to spill all about a chain of skin centers that she used to endorse.

Last week on national television, Osang showed bulges in her midriff and back, which she had attributed to a botched liposuction procedure by Dr. Vicky Belo, her former friend and business partner who had performed several sessions of liposuction on the actress. After interviews with TV movie reporters, Osang went under the knife again, this time of Dr. Manuel Calayan.

Four liters of fat were sucked out of Osang's body during the two hours it took to sculpt the actress' body, according to Calayan, who expressed satisfaction at the end result even if Osang still has to wear post-operative binders on her upper arms and torso to hold them in shape.

"I'm happy with how she turned out," he said.

Barely a week after the operation, Osang is face-to-face with INQUIRER Entertainment in a hotel room at the Oakwood Hotel in Makati City. Dressed only in a Marks and Spencer black body suit, Osang proudly showed how her upper arms had been tightened and how her buttocks had been lifted.

"Hindi ako alagain," she said. *"Hindi nahirapan ang asawa ko. Dati, talagang nakaratay ako at ang daming nakatapal sa akin na sanitary napkin dahil may leaks at maraming butas. Ngayon, walo lang ang butas."*

The only thing she regrets is that Dr. Calayan has been dragged into the intrigues in show biz.

"Pero ngayon, pinipilahan na siya ng customers," said Osang.

Flawless was conceived as a chain of skin care centers targeting the low-end market. Osang said Belo convinced her to endorse Flawless since its market was the "bakya" and the Japayukis.

"Bakya ang term niya, ha," stressed Osang.

Initial sales projection was P60,000 per day, according to the actress. But when it made P90,000 per day, the owners wanted the take to increase to P120,000 for a branch to make money. This baffled Osang.

"Kung walang kita, bakit expand *nang* expand?"

The owners also complained that Osang's husband, Tito Molina, was not keeping his part of the bargain to manage the centers. She said they complained Molina was only spending his time smoking or drinking coffee whenever he visited the Megamall branch.

"First of all, *huwag nila isama ang asawa ko dahil hindi naman talaga siya dapat mag*-manage *niyan,"* said Osang. *"Wala naman siyang suweldo. Abonado pa ako sa gasolina, parking at pagkain niya pag nagpupunta siya doon. Huwag silang magkamali na idamay ang asawa ko at marami pa akong sasabihin. Ano ang gusto nilang gawin ng asawa ko, mag-*facial *doon? Napabayaan nga niya ang* car detailing business *namin."*

Threatening text

Also last Sunday on TV, Dr. Belo's former friend said she received scary text messages threatening to burn her face with acid if she showed up at the Flawless Skin Centers in SM North Edsa and SM Megamall. She said the messages, which could have come from dissatisfied customers of the skin care centers that she endorsed for Belo, also served as a wake-up call for the actress that the centers were not living up to the expectations of the customers.

"Meron diyang nasunog ang balat," she said, *"o nabakbak ang balat. Hindi nila pinag-igi. Gusto lang nila kumita. Ako naman,* promote *nang* promote *kahit hindi ako nagpapagawa sa* Flawless. Like *sa* bleaching, *nag*-promote *ako para sa* bleaching *eh hindi naman* ako *nagpa*-bleach *doon. Bakit naman ako magpapa*-bleach, *e maputi na ako.* German *ako."*

The actress lamented that the owners, who gave her a 20 percent share of the business in exchange for her endorsement and occasional site visits to attract customers, did not ensure the quality of their products. She cited the loofa scrub, which she said scratches the skin. She also mentioned the soap, sold for P90 per bar, which she said costs only P30.

"Sana man lang, pinagbuti nila," said Osang.

Finally, the owners negotiated to buy Osang's 20 percent. The price tag for her share was P1.5 million, a paltry sum when compared to rates for product endorsements. Osang said she agreed *"dahil ayaw ko ng gulo,"* and she feared a court case would wipe her out.

Then she turned around, looked for another surgeon and announced to the world that she would go ask him to repair what she said was the damage Belo had done to her body. That surgeon was Calayan.

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Angelica after the breakup

A ROW of trophies from various awards are displayed in the living room.

By Marinel R. Cruz
Photos by Jim Guiao Punzalan

TRENDY satin blouses are her costumes for the *sosyal* character she plays in 'Berks.'

TEEN actress Angelica Panganiban admits she got over her boyfriend of four years, Carlo Aquino, only last October. But she is very proud of her relationship with him, she says.

"It only goes to show that I'm able to sustain a relationship even if I'm still a teenager," Angelica, 17, tells INQUIRER Entertainment at her home in Quezon City.

Angelica and Carlo first appeared as a love team in the youth television series "G-Mik." They were last seen together in the now-defunct Sunday afternoon show "Berks."

The cause of their breakup in July 2003 was reportedly Carlo's courtship of Angelica's best friend, Camille Pratts, who was said to have even encouraged the young man. Because of the incident, Angelica and Camille did not talk to each other for some time, but they have since patched things up. Camille is said to be going steady now with commercial model Francis Ricafort, Alma Moreno's nephew and LJ Moreno's elder brother.

"I did everything I could for the relationship to work," Angelica says of her years with Carlo. "I almost gave up my family and friends. When we broke up, I realized how good it felt to be with my friends. Now I have quality time with my mom and grandma."

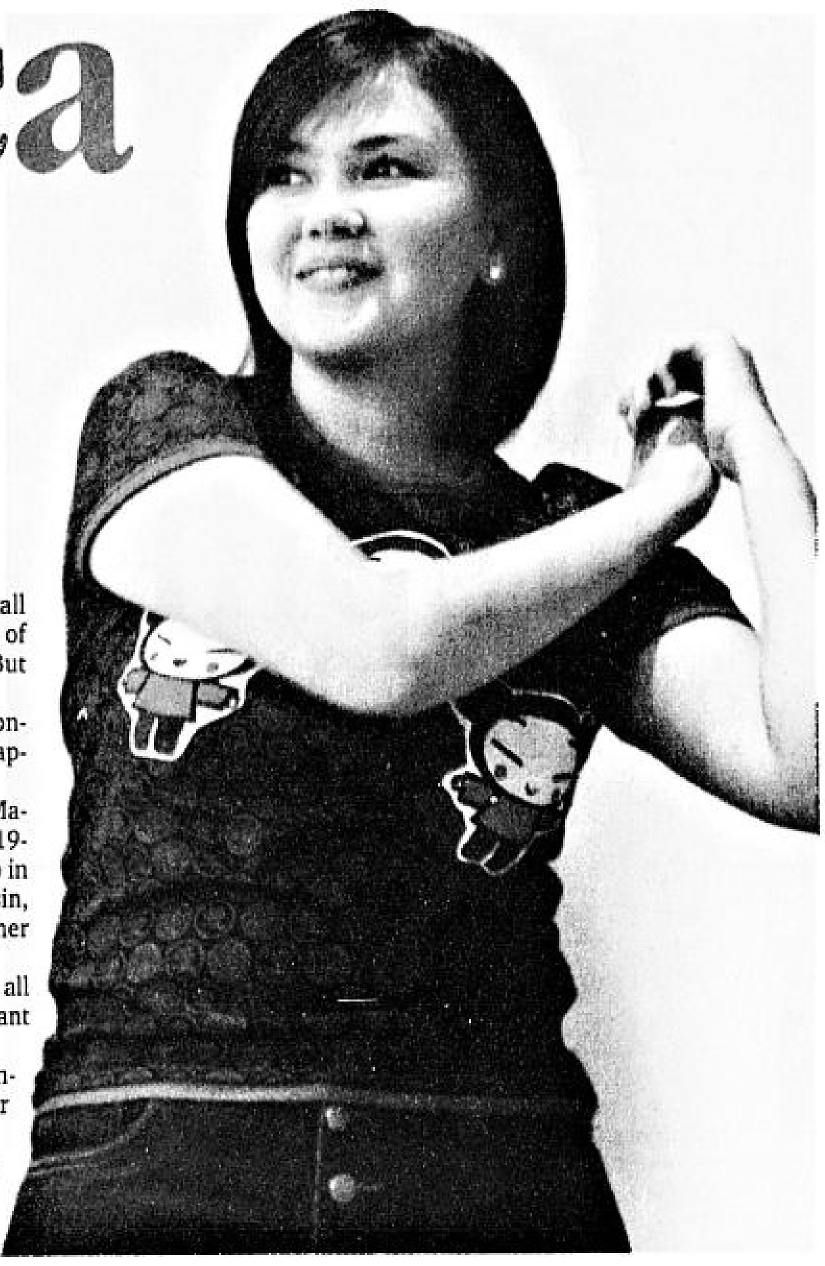
But she also admits it was hard to get over Carlo, and negative stories about their breakup only made things worse.

"They kept saying that I was making up all those stories so people would take notice of me," says Angelica, "so I used to cry a lot. But last October, I got my closure.

"But I'm not yet ready for another relationship," she adds. "I'm happy with what's happening to me right now."

In the new ABS-CBN soap series, "Mangarap Ka," Angelica plays the eccentric 19-year-old Catherine Sita "Cutie" Carter. Also in "Mangarap Ka" are Piolo Pascual, Rio Locsin, Patrick Garcia, Nova Villa and newcomer Steven Christian Fermo.

"This is the show I've been waiting for all my life," Angelica declares. "I really want this to work well."



OUT OF THE CLOSET

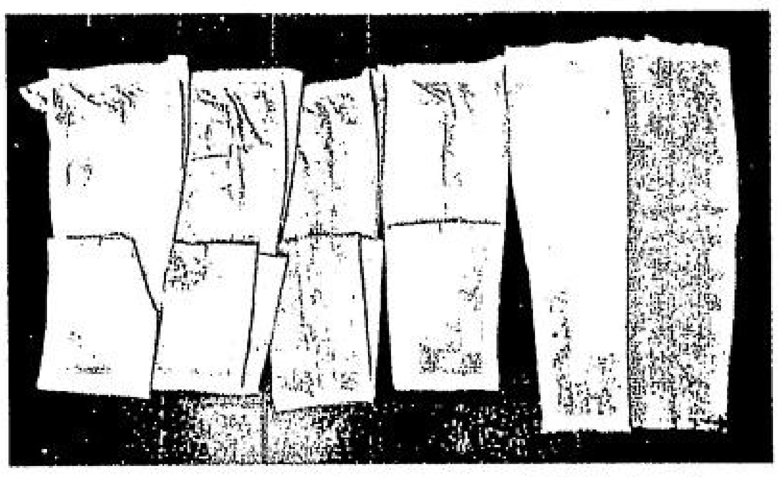
To prepare for her character, Angelica had to have a major wardrobe makeover.

"Cutie is very different from the real me," Angelica says as she ushers INQUIRER Entertainment into her bedroom. "She prefers really loud colors and really dark makeup."

"G-Mik Nation" clothes. "We were told to buy bright and colorful outfits for 'G-Mik Nation' concert tours so I bought this super-low backless blouse. I feel so uncomfortable wearing it. I got this for the concerts thinking that I could wear it but when the chance came, I chickened out. I didn't know if it would fit my chest.

"I also have leatherette pants just for the concerts, like this pair of snakeskin that my grandma in LA sent me. But now that 'G-Mik' is no longer on TV, you will never see me wearing them. I'm just not the type who likes leather.

"I wear a lot of colored pants in 'G-Mik.' My character loves wearing them—green, violet, blue, pink. *Buhay na buhay ang* colors. For variation, all I did was cut the hardly used colored pants into capris."



PANTS in loud colors for Angelica's character in 'G-Mik.' But these are not for the actress, who says she will not be seen wearing them.

"Berks" costumes. "I'm not fond of wearing long-sleeved shirts but I had to buy a lot of them because my 'Berks' character, Nicole, likes wearing them. Nicole was supposed to be the richest member of the group, so *sosyal siya*. She likes corporate outfits because she's more mature than the rest.

"Toward the end of the show, I bought a couple of blouses for Nicole. Polo shirts became too old-fashioned for her so I got her trendy satin and stretchable blouses. Rich *pa rin ang dating*."

"Mangarap Ka" costumes. "For my new soap, I had to have a major wardrobe change. I am made to wear spaghetti-strapped blouses, shorts, hipster jeans and knee-high boots. I even had to wear fake-colored hair. And my make-up, super-*kapal*!

"Most of my costumes are either in the car or on the set. I don't take them home unless they need to be washed because we follow continuity rules when taping."

ANGELICA is not into leatherette pants and bright-colored tops like the outfits she wore in 'G-Mik' a few years back.

Dresses. "I only wear dresses to formal occasions like the prom or a debut. I wore this two-piece lavender gown to my prom last February. My aunt in the States sent this to me. I won the Prom Queen title while wearing this so this is really memorable.

"I have this other favorite dress. But I've never worn it. I'm still waiting for the perfect occasion. Outfits like this can only be worn once. It's really heavy. It's backless and has a really sexy cut."

Gym clothes. "They are all stashed in one corner of my closet. I only use this cotton shirt from Teen Spirit when I play badminton because it has the word 'badminton' printed on it (laughs)."

Blouses. "This halter top is too sexy for me. That's why I've not worn it since I bought it in the States. But this spaghetti-strapped blouse, I can handle. I simply match it with a cardigan if I have to wear it outside during day time."

Jeans. "My favorite jeans is dark-colored, flared and comes with a stylish belt. It's from Freeway. I bought it just last December. I love it because it's very comfortable. It doesn't hug the legs too tightly when I'm sitting down."

THE KOREAN character Pucca is Angelica's creature of choice. It figures in her collection of bags, T-shirts and jackets.

Jackets. "My favorite jackets have cute Pucca designs on them. If girls my age collect Hello Kitty or Winnie the Pooh stuff, I collect Pucca. But more than that, I like collared cotton jackets.

"This La Pagayo jacket is memorable because my mom gave it to me. All the cast members of 'G-Mik,' like Stefano (Mori) and Camille, have them. I made *lambing* to my mom Christmas of 2000, so she bought me one.

"I also bought a couple of Old Navy sweatshirts when I went to the States. I used to jog around our compound before I enrolled in the gym near my school. It really helps me sweat."

SKETCHERS is her brand for footwear, like this white pair of rubber shoes.

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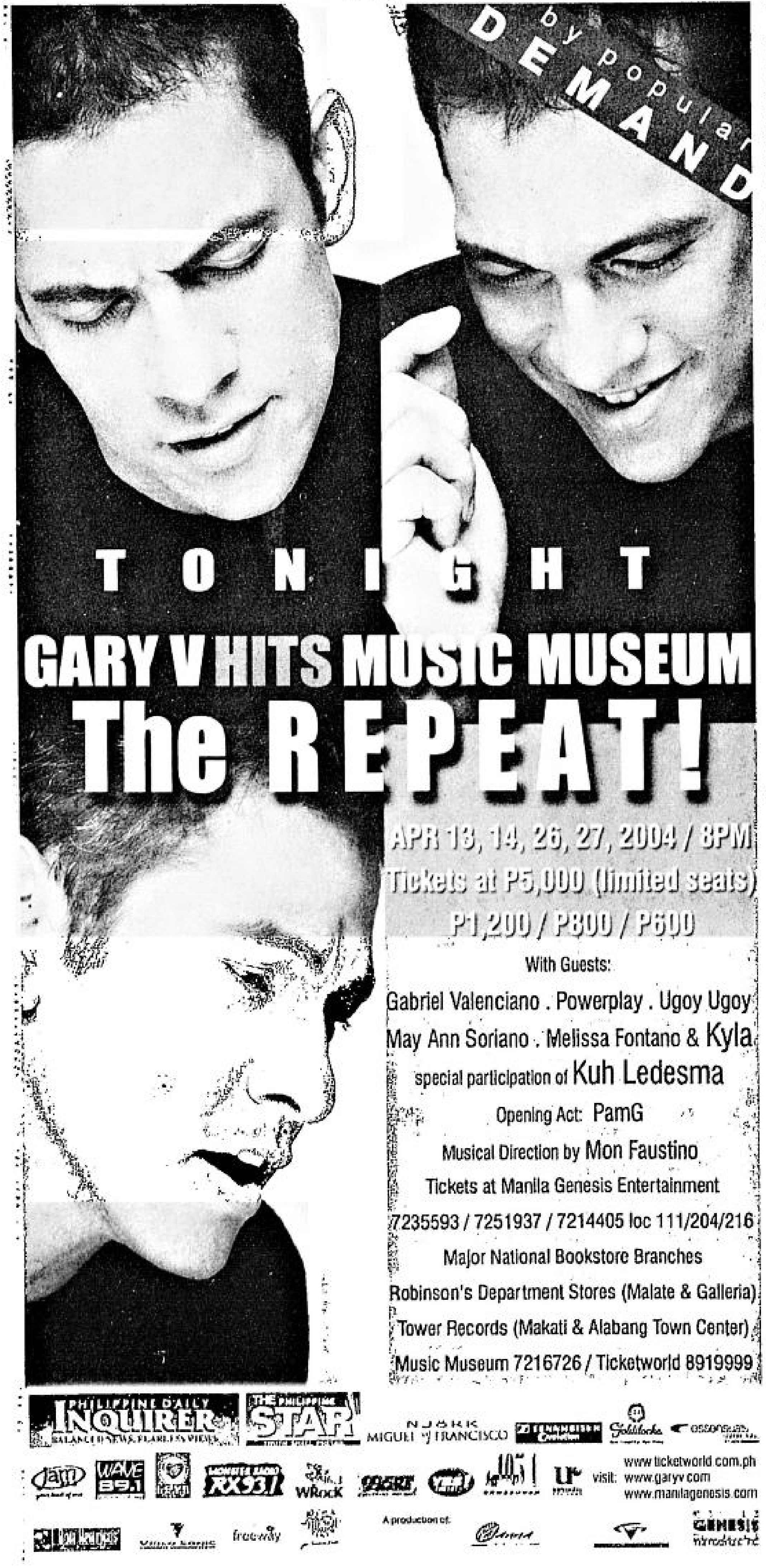

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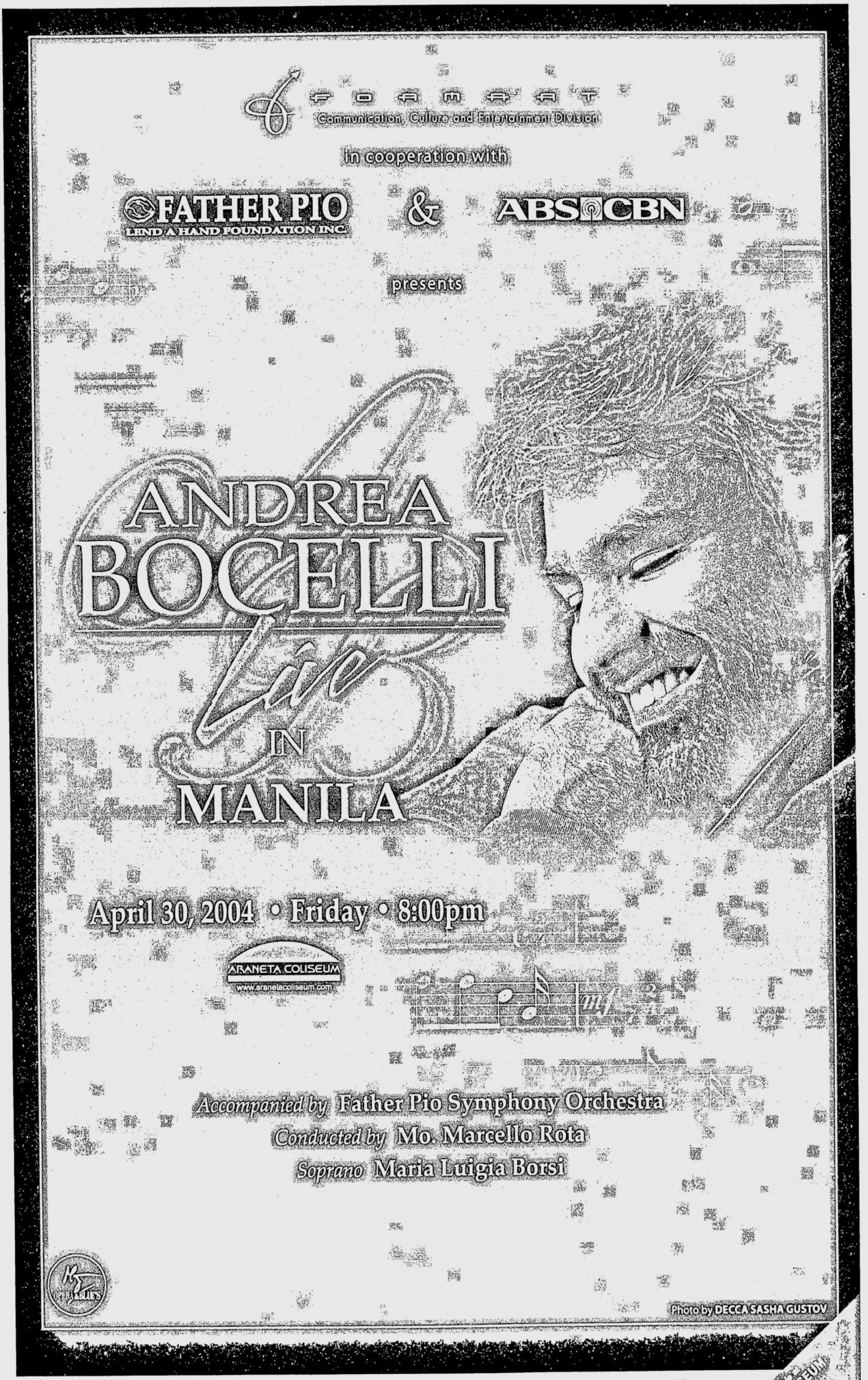

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Registration is on May 2, 4-5 pm at the Cinema lobby of the SM Megamall and Judging follows. Winners will be selected from the first 50 participants/contestants. Four winners will receive P10,000 cash plus a Leonardo tote bag, a Sari-sari shirt, and instant access to the Red Carpet Premiere.

Photo Exhibit

See the photo exhibit of "I Will Survive" movie starting May 5 at the Cinema lobby of SM Megamall

DATE WITH THE STARS

Catch the cast of "I Will Survive" as they visit SM Cinemas on May 8, 2004.

red carpet premiere happening on:
may2 2004 / 7:30pm
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7 MASIKIP SA DIBDIB 11.55, 2.05, 4.15, 6.25, 8.35, 10.35
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4 TAKING LIVES 12.00, 2.00, 4.00, 6.00, 8.10
5 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST 12.20, 3.00, 5.40, 8.30
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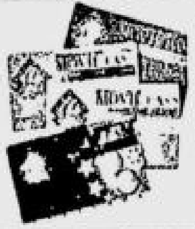

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STUDDARD

Ruben Studdard, genial giant

OVER 24 million callers voted for Ruben Studdard to become the "American Idol" for 2003.

Nicknamed velvet teddy bear by soul diva Gladys Knight, Studdard, in the midst of a hectic national tour with fellow "Idol" contestants, calmly reflects, "I got over stage fright early in life so I never got nervous doing the show week after week. Having a career in music is what I've always wanted to do so this is the fulfillment of my dreams!"

Tradition

Born Christopher Ruben Studdard in Birmingham, Alabama, Studdard, 25, is known to his family as "Chris." Now, he's known to the world as the soulful young singer carrying on a musical tradition that includes artists such as Donny Hathaway, Stevie Wonder and J Records labelmate Luther Vandross (all three considered 'primary influences).

With the first single, a stunning version of UK band Westlife's "Flying Without Wings" (produced by the Underdogs and Face), already a chart-topping smash, Studdard says his first CD is "something that everyone can listen to. I want it to be a real representation of who I am musically and, so far, everything is going really well in the studio."

Tuba player

The youngest son of two educators, Emily and Kevin Studdard Sr., Ruben recalls singing for the first time at the Rising Star Baptist church in Birmingham at age three. "My mother was in the local choir. I went to pre-school church and it was a teacher there who first heard me sing. I was doing solos at a young age—my first one was 'I'm Yours, Lord.' I continued singing in church and in school and at some point, I took piano lessons. I did ok with the piano but I was a very good tuba player!" Ruben laughs.

Football scholar

During his years at Huffman High School, Ruben played football and went to Alabama A%26M University on a football scholarship. But it was music that constantly called to him. "I listened to all kinds of music at home," he recalls.

Ruben Studdard's "Soulful" debut album is now available in record bars nationwide.

He says, "This first album is important to me. I don't want to be a one-hit wonder. I want to keep making good music.

KENKOY LASIK by Tony Velasquez celebrating 75 years

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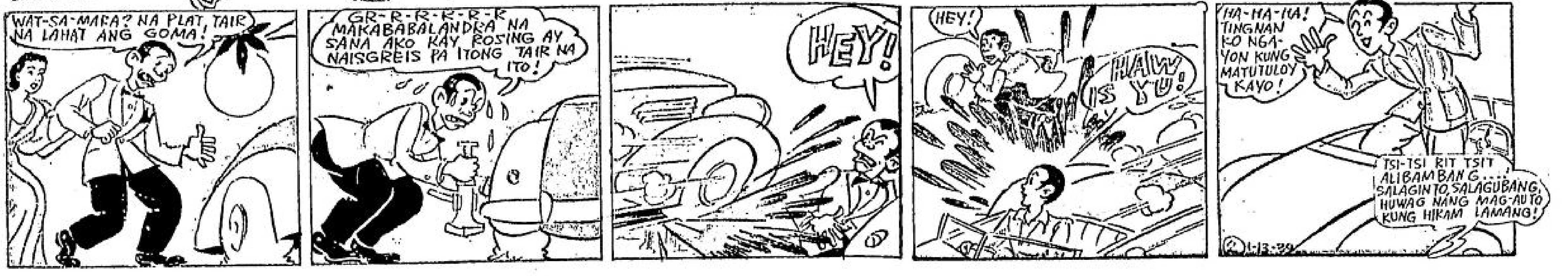
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GR-R-R-R-R-R MAKABABALANDRA NA SANA AKO KAY ROSING AY NAISGREIS PA ITONG TAIR NA ITO!
HEY!
HEY!
HAW, IS YU!
HA-HA-HA! TINGNAN KO NGA-YON KUNG MATUTULOY KAYO!
TSI-TSI RIT TSIT ALIBAMBANG.... SALAGINTO, SALAGUBANG, HUWAG NANG MAG-AUTO KUNG HIKAM LAMANG!
1-13-39

'Keka' to compete in international film fests

HOT Babe Katya Santos plays a serial killer in the film.

By Leah C. Salterio
Contributor

A SMALL budget movie about a female serial killer will be screened at the Udine Far East Film Festival in Italy on April 26 and also at the Los Angeles Asian Pacific Film and Video Festival on May 3.

"Keka," the second film megged by 23-year-old director Quark Henares, starred Hot Babe Katya Santos. It was produced by Viva Films on a P6 million budget.

With the international showing of "Keka," Henares follows in the footsteps of his film idols, Mike de Leon, Ishmael Bernal, Lino Brocka and Kidlat Tahimik. He leaves on Wednesday to attend the Los Angeles Film and Video Festival.

Dream

Henares does not hide his excitement about his movie being seen by an international audience.

"It's the dream of every filmmaker to bring his work abroad," he says. "I'm very fortunate that with my second film, I've been invited to join international film festivals. I feel that my efforts and hard work in that movie have paid off. I cannot be thankful enough for the good breaks that I've gotten quite early in my directing career."

Director Rico Ilarde, son of former TV host and senator, Eddie Ilarde, paved the way for "Keka" to be included in international film festivals. Ilarde introduced Henares to Filipino-Chinese film connoisseur Roger Garcia, who goes around Asia scouting for unconventional works of new directors.

Along with "Keka," Jeffrey Jeturian's "Bridal Shower" and Erik Matti's "Gagamboy" will be screened in Udine. In Los Angeles, "Keka" will be shown with Maryo J. de los Reyes' "Magnifico," Marilou Diaz-Abaya's "Noon at Ngayon," Tikoy Aguiluz's "XXX.com" and Ditsi Carolino's documentary, "Riles."

"The movie is my homage to 'Batch '81' of Mike de Leon, although I think it would be insulting to Mike de Leon to even compare my film to his," says Henares with self-deprecation. "But I'm really a big Mike de Leon fan."

"Keka" was a dream project for Henares.

"The script of 'Keka' has been on my mind since I was in high school," he says.

Henares reveals that his high school art teacher at Maria Montessori, painter Francesca "Keka" Enriquez, inspired the title of the film.

High school projects

As early as high school, Henares had worked at the helm of short films projects for school. His first, "Abortion," was what prodded him to pursue film directing. Thanks to his supportive parents—dermatologist Vicki Belo and radio station owner Atom Henares—the younger Henares was able to take his ambition to a higher degree.

In college at the Ateneo de Manila University, Henares directed "Saging at Rambutan," a film about an unknown director hired by a major film outfit to make stars out of a teenage star and a guy from a deodorant commercial. A few years later, "Saging at Rambutan" became the inspiration for "Gamitan," Henares' first commercial film.

Confusing

In his final year in college, Henares megged "Buhay Ko Bilang Suicidal Teen" and "A Date With Jao Mapa." The second earned for him a Palanca Award for best screenplay. After graduation, he enrolled in a short filmmaking course at the New York Film Academy.

The script for "Keka" was orignally meant for Jolina Magdangal and Eppy Quizon, says Henares. But he didn't complain when Viva chose Katya Santos for "Keka." Quizon's role of the bungling homicide detective on the trail of the serial killer was played by Wendell Ramos.

When "Keka" opened in Metro Manila last year, the box office results had been disappointing. Its story about a female serial killer played by an actress known for her baring left the mass audience confused that it was a skin flick, and disappointed when Katya did not bare in the movie. It was also mistaken for a horror-suspense thriller. But according to Henares, the movie is a combination of romance, comedy and violence—"in the vein of Radyo," directed by Yam Laranas.

"Although it is a revenge movie, 'Keka' does not give you a heavy feeling after watching the film," Henares explains. "I have so much respect for my audience that's why I make it a point to polish every scene in my movie."

Revenge film

In "Keka," Quark does an M. Night Shyamalan ("Signs," "Unbreakable" and "Sixth Sense") and inconspicuously sings in the background of a club scene. But its Quentin Tarantino's "Pulp Fiction," which is Henares' all-time-favorite movie.

"I believe Tarantino has also influenced my filmmaking style," Quark admits. "I also look up to David Lynch, director of 'Mulholland Drive,' 'Twin Peaks' and 'Blue Velvet,' David Fincher, who directed 'Fight Club' and 'Seven' and Hal Hartley, who did 'Amateur' and 'Trust.' These directors have works which are very original and well-defined."

"Keka" will also be screened in the non-competition category of the Asian-American Film Festival in New York in July, and possibly in the Toronto Film Festival in September.

Too few movies, too many film awards

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

2004 is shaping up as another less than prosperous year for the local movie industry, with only three new Filipino films being shown each month. In ironic contrast to this, new film awards competitions are being launched every year!

This is the height of irony, because all those film awards groups (some eight at last count) have fewer and fewer movies to evaluate and give prizes to.

Let's hope that this situation doesn't degenerate further, to the surreal level of our eventually having more film awards groups than movies to view!

Given the low output of the local movie industry, our priority should be generating more film, productions, rather than more awards groups.

Why are so many movie awards being instituted? Because they're relatively easier to put up, and carry with them so much power and prestige on the local film scene.

Trouble is, awards groups have radically different capabilities and standards. How do we decide which groups' decisions should be believed?

Well, their track records have to speak for them. By this yardstick, the Manunuris' Urian awards still rate highest in most local film buffs' view.

But the awards groups' choices have become so diverse and even mutually-contradictory that the viewing public is in a dizzy tizzy. So, we'll just have to ignore the obviously far-out or compromised verdicts.

And, most importantly, let's not get so hung up on awards, and focus instead on helping our better writer-directors make more and better films.

'Buhay Beauty Queen'

FOR weeks now, we've occassionally been watching "Buhay Beauty Queen" weeknights on ABC-5.

Billed as the first reality-based coverage of a beauty competition, the program chronicles the activities and progress of contestants in this year's Asia-Pacific beauty tilt.

The appeal of the program is its espousal of themes like "beauties are people, too" and "beauty isn't skin-deep." Those are valid themes, so we watch the show with interest.

It also helps that some of the contestants are lively, idiosyncratic characters who tell it like it is, and love to poke fun even at themselves.

This runs counter to the traditional view that beauty pageant hopefuls are plastic Barbie dolls who are afraid to say or do the "wrong" thing, because it could cost them the crown.

On a recent telecast, a contestant cheerfully spoofed the entire beauty pageant syndrome by blurting out, "World Peace!" at odd intervals. The exclamation is of course the mantra of all motherhood mantras cited by contestants as the main reason why they join beauty competitions, so it got a big laugh.

On the debit side, a number of the contestants aren't great lookers, so the pageant and its TV coverage lose some of the requisite competitive edge. And some of the contenders' attempts at coming off as deep and sensitive don't succeed.

Sometimes, this results in boob-tube booboos that are as hilarious as they are spontaneous.—But we aren't complaining about *that*!

Scott directs 'Man on Fire'

TOP action-drama director **Tony Scott** megs **Denzel Washington**'s latest starrer, "Man on Fire." The movie is especially significant for Scott, because it took him 20 years to bring it to the screen!

Scott is a master of visceral filmmaking, balancing technical virtuosity with an exuberant sense of tempo to create a series of landmark action films, like "Top Gun," "Crimson Tide," "Days of Thunder," "The Last Boy Scout" and "Enemy of the State."

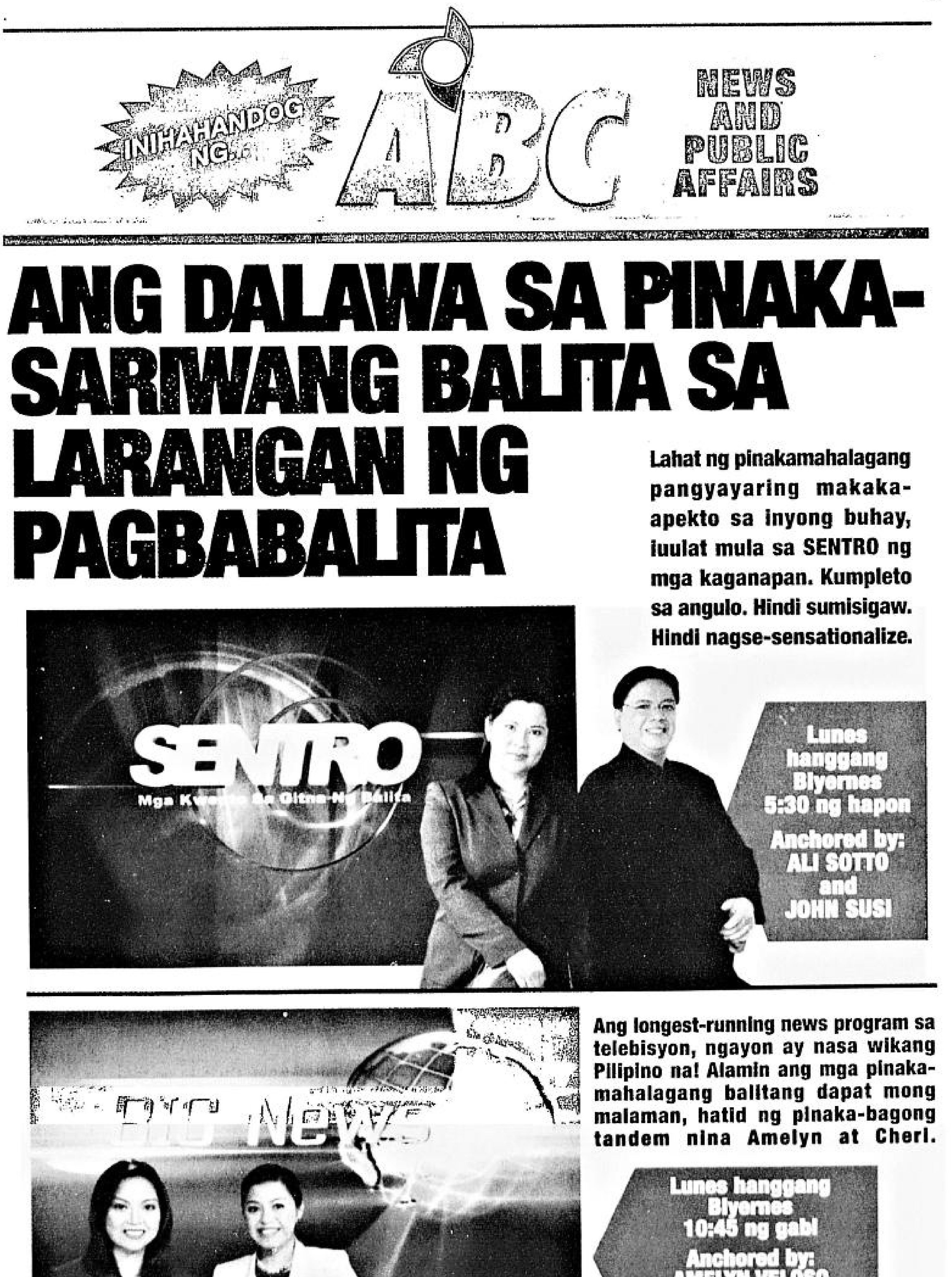
In "Man of Fire," Scott focuses on the kidnapping "business" in Mexico City. Kidnapping has become a way of life there, very controlled and organized, a veritable industry where the stakes are extremely high.

Scott shows this "industry" at work in his movie's story about a young girl (**Dakota Fanning**) who is kidnapped despite the fact that she has a bodyguard (Washington) who's a tough and vastly experienced government operative.

Feedback

FROM **Reginald Vercelles** of Quezon City: "I would like to add my suggestions of subject matter

TOO/C7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3	HELLBOY	11:20, 2:00, 4:40 7:20, 10:00	PG-13
4	PETER PAN	11:20, 1:40, 4:00 6:20, 8:40, 10:55	GP

GMA 7 prepares for 'judgement day'

AS ELECTION day comes near, GMA 7 prepares for the most comprehensive election coverage to date: Eleksyon 2004. The network's news and public affairs hosts—Mel Tiangco, Jessica Soho, Arnold Clavio, Vicky Morales, Winnie Monsod, Oscar Orbos, Howie Severino and Mike Enriquez—will anchor the coverage. The Liga ng Katotohanan as the GMA News and Public Affairs reporters are called, will be deployed throughout the country and abroad to provide live, up-to-the-minute reports.

Adhering to Servisyong Totoo, GMA's Eleksyon 2004 is committed to giving the public an objective and balanced coverage.

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3	PORNOGRAPHER
4 (DTS)	SEX EDUCATION

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202

1 (DOLBY)	HELLBOY
2	BOOBITA ROSE
3 (DTS)	PAY CHECK
4	KARIBAL
5	HOUSE OF THE DEAD

Olivarez Tri-Cinema
(Biñan) tel (049) 511.8883

1	PURI
2	ACACIA

Olivarez Los Baños
tel (049) 249.2558

1	HELLBOY
2	ACACIA
3	PAY CHECK

Mega Center Mall
(Cabanatuan City) tel (044) 463.3283

1	PETER PAN
2	ACACIA
3 (DTS)	BOOBITA ROSE
4 (DOLBY)	50 FIRST DATE

Cabuyao
(Laguna City) tel 520.8914

1 (DTS)	RESERVE

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790

1	BOOBITA ROSE
2	HOUSE OF THE DEAD
3	PAYCHECK
4	PETER PAN

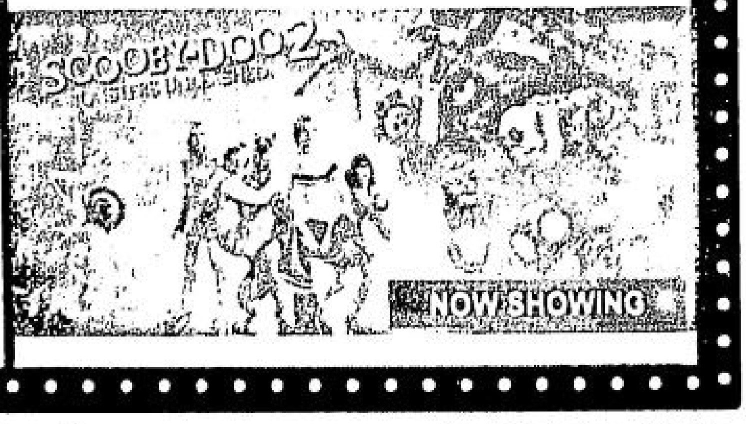
Emperor
(Rosario Cavite) tel (046) 438.1657

1	BOOBITA ROSE
2	VENUS

*Movies are subject to change without prior notice

ADVANCED SCREENING THX DOLBY DIGITAL dts SDDS

FESTIVAL SUPERMALL
Level 4
Festival Supermall
Filinvest - Alabang
Tel 85035-71 to 72
Schedule subject to change without prior notice



Mikey Arroyo actor at heart

PAMPANGA Vice Governor Mikey Arroyo is still an actor at heart. But until the elections next month, Mikey is more focused on politics.

Leading in surveys, Mikey remains on top of various projects and is in the midst of consultations with the people of Pampanga.

"I'm very happy for the support that the people of Pampanga are showing me, most especially my constituents in the 2nd district," says the eldest son of President Macapagal-Arroyo. "I've done this much as vice governor, now I want to help more people as congressman.

After the elections, Mikey's long-delayed movie project, "Kapitan Kidlat," will be shown in theaters.

THEATER MOVIE GUIDE

MANILA	
EASTERN	
MAXIM	CLOSED
MIRAMAR	SEX BOMB / RAMPADORA
ODEON	X-MEN 2
ODEON-2	BUKID AY BASA / KASIBULAN
ROBEN	BOLD STAR
TANDEM-1	SUGAT
TANDEM-2	KATAWAN MO LANGIT KO
TIMES	SPY / LEGEND OF CROCODILE

QUEZON CITY	
ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	ORIGINAL SIN
ACT-4	HANGGANG KAILAN KA PAPATAY
CORONET A	CHECK -INN
CORONET B	A MAN APART
QUEZON-1	BERTUD NG PUTIK
REMAR	X-MEN 2
REMAR-2	BOLD STAR

NOVA MALL - NOVALICHES CINEMA	
A	CHECK -IN
B	CLOSED
C	

MANDALUYONG CITY	
SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20-79 / 633-78-51 TO 70
CINEMA-1	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
CINEMA-2	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION

CAINTA RIZAL	
STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-5401 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	PASSION OF THE CHRIST
CINEMA-2	CHECK INN
CINEMA-3	TWISTED
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	TAKING LIVES
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	SCOOBY DOO 2
CINEMA-6	NIGHTMARE
CINEMA-7	ACACIA
CINEMA-8	VENUS
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	HELLBOY
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	HELLBOY
CINEMA-11(SDDS)	SPARTAN
CINEMA-12	PETER PAN
CINEMA-14	PAYCHECK
CINEMA-15	MASIKIP SA DIBDIB

LORES	
CINEMA-2	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-3	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT

NE CINEMAGIC - CABANATUAN	
(LAS PINAS)	HIGHWAYMEN
CINEMA-1	MASIKIP SA DIBDIB
CINEMA-2	PETER PAN
CINEMA-4	[illegible]

UNIWIDE COASTAL MALL	
(PARANAQUE)	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-1	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
CINEMA-2	MEN IN BLACK II
CINEMA-4	SELDA

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DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX

NOW SHOWING

CINEMA 1	HELLBOY	11:00, 1:45, 4:30, 7:15, 10:00	P13
CINEMA 2	SPARTAN	11:30, 1:50, 4:10, 6:30, 8:50	P13

TICKET PRICES & SCREENING TIME SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE.
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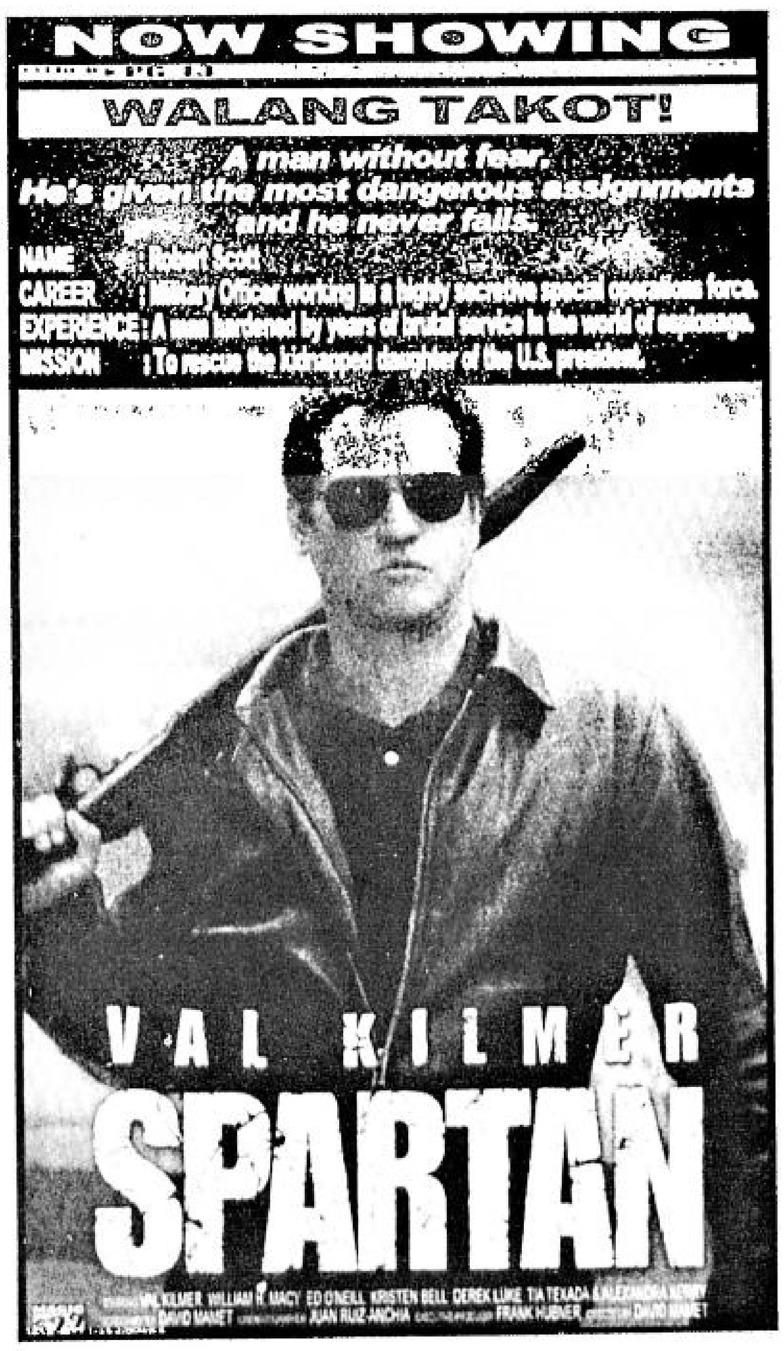
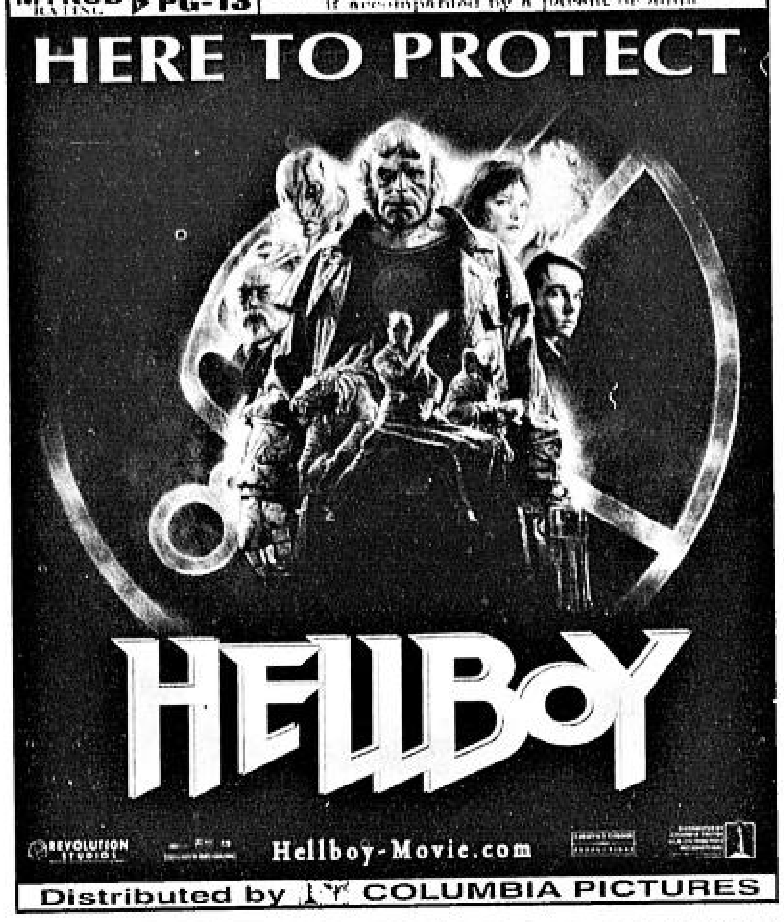
MUSIC MUSEUM

APR. 26 & 27	"GARY V."	8:00PM
MAY 1 & 2	"MENOPAUSE THE MUSICAL"	4:00PM

FOR INQUIRIES & RESERVATION, PLS. CALL : 721-6726 OR 721-0635


NOW SHOWING
PG 13
WALANG TAKOT!
A man without fear.
He's given the most dangerous assignments and he never fails.
NAME : Robert Scott
CAREER : Military Officer working in a highly secretive special operations force.
EXPERIENCE : A man hardened by years of brutal service in the world of espionage.
MISSION : To rescue the kidnapped daughter of the U.S. president.
VAL KILMER
SPARTAN

After X-Men & LXG comes a new
special-effects-packed comicbook adventure !
6TH 'ACTION SHOWDOWN' DAY !
MTRCB RATING ▶ PG-13 Children below 13 yrs. old will only be allowed if accompanied by a parent or adult



Distributed by COLUMBIA PICTURES

POWER PLANT
CINEMA
Rockwell Center, Makati City ☎ Tel. No: 8981440-41
DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX

TWISTED R13 12:00, 2:00, 4:00, 6:00, 8:00, 10:00	PETER PAN GP 11:50, 2:15, 4:40, 7:05, 9:30	HELLBOY PG13 11:50, 2:20, 4:50, 7:20, 9:50
PAYCHECK PG13 12:30, 2:55, 5:20, 7:45, 10:10	SPARTAN PG13 1:40, 3:50, 6:00, 8:10, 10:20	HELLBOY PG13 12:30, 3:00

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SCREAM ALL YOU C...
SHU CHI ATHENA CHU NICK CHEUNG TIFFANY LEE FRANCIS NG
www.incubus.com
Directed by: Billy Chung

BOYS OF SUMMER

THESE rising young stars have found their sense of style in the summer collection of Ducks Unlimited. The collection features a merger of comfort, spirited style and self-confidence. Clothes are suited for the steamy summer weather.

Araneta Center
ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE

ALI MALL CINEPLEX

Ali 3	HELLBOY
Ali 4	SPARTAN
Ali 5	PAYCHECK
Ali 6	TWISTED
Ali 7	MASIKIP SA DIBDIB

NEW FIESTA CARNIVAL
Open Daily 4 PM to 10 PM

ARANETA COLISEUM

APR 30	ANDREA BOCELLI LIVE IN MANILA
MAY 1	PBA : ALASKA VS. SHELL
MAY 2	PBA : RED BULL VS. FEDEX
MAY 3	AMA GRADUATION
MAY 4	NCA 7-COCK DERBY
MAY 5	PBA : ALASKA VS. STA. LUCIA
MAY 6	NCA7-COCK DERBY
MAY 9	PBA: FEDEX VS. SHELL
MAY 12	PBA - STA LUCIA VS GINEBRA

For tickets, call TicketNet at 911-5555

SHOW STOPPER

'Idol' loser eclipses winner

A RUNNER-UP on the second series of "American Idol," Clay Aiken's rise to fame has shadowed the career of his English counterpart, Gareth Gates, on the "Pop Idol" show.

Aiken and Gates can both boast sales figures to rival and sometimes eclipse those of the two singers who beat them to the top slot in their respective competitions, Ruben Studdard and Will Young.

The second series of "American Idol," which came to the screens in spring 2003, established the show as one of the most popular on US television, with viewers enthralled by the battle between the larger-than-life belter Studdard and boy-next-door balladeer Aiken.

Following the show's climax in May 2003, Aiken signed a recording contract with RCA Records and entered the studio with veteran producer Clive Davis to work on his debut album.

He enjoyed immediate success the following month when the album's carrier single, "This is the Night," pipped Studdard's "Flying Without Wings" to the top slot in the Billboard Hot 100.

Aiken also beat Studdard to the draw in the album stakes, releasing "Measure of a Man" in October.

This MOR collection topped the album chart in the first week of release.

Aiken's "Measure of a Man," featuring the chart-topping "Invisible," are now available on CDs and cassettes at leading record bars under BMG Records Pilipinas.

AIKEN

Too . . .

From page C5

for other religious movies, after the success of Mel Gibson's 'Passion': on **Mother Theresa**, the Pope, St. Francis of Assisi, **Padre Pio**, Filipino missionaries martyred abroad, Bro. **Eddie Villanueva** (win or lose), and teenage saints as role models for young viewers."

THE COOLEST ACTION-COMEDY OF THE SUMMER
OPENS APRIL 28 !
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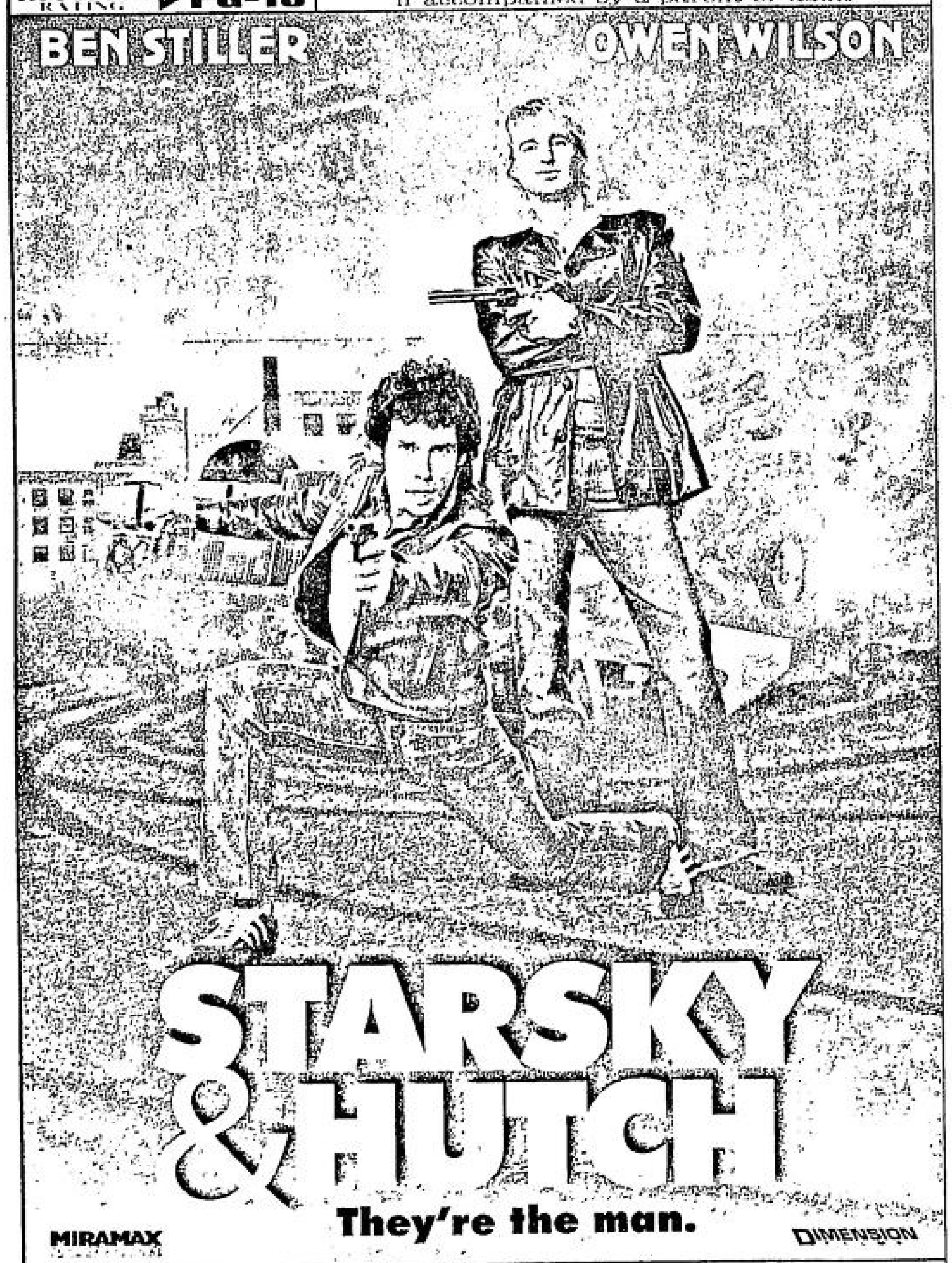
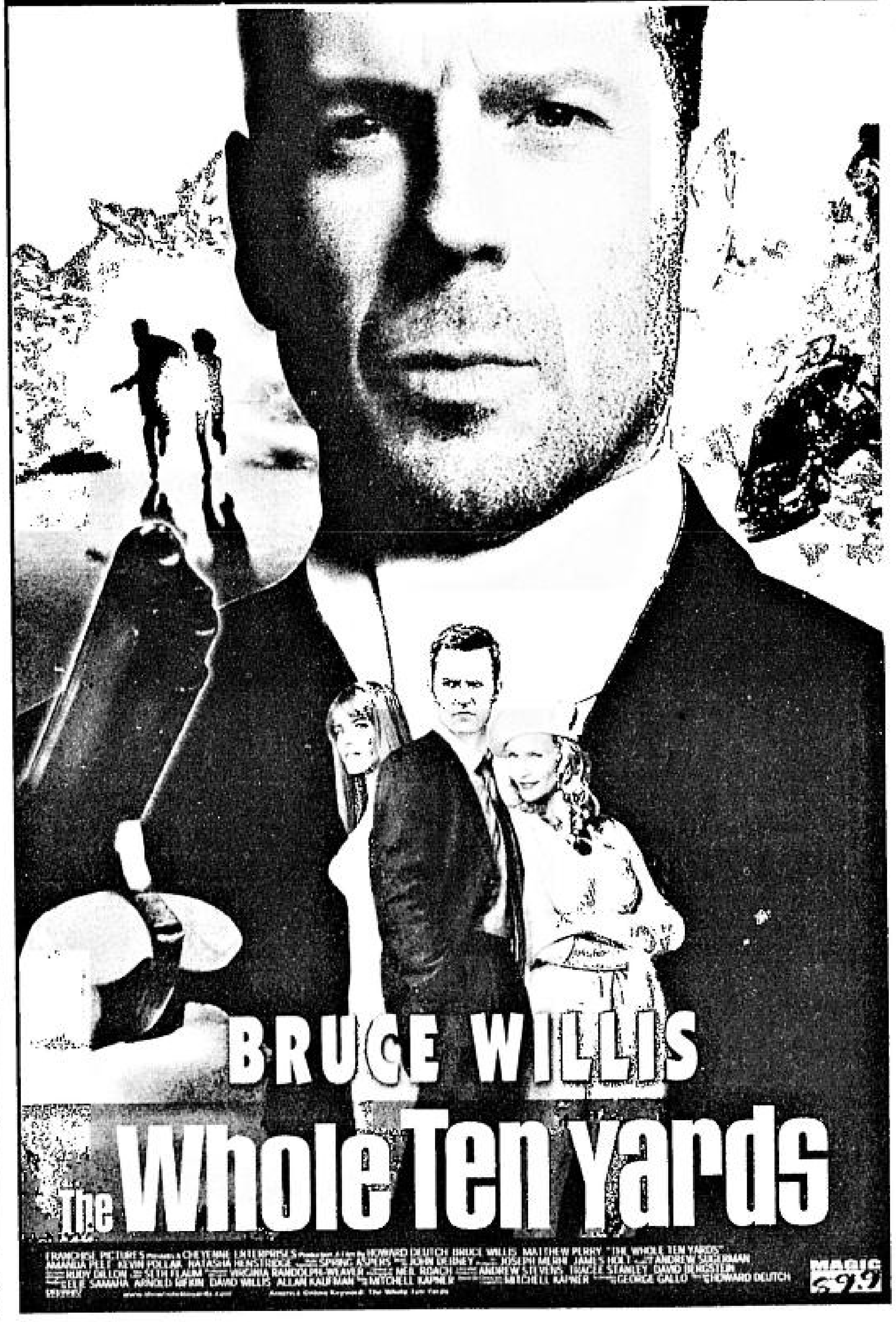


Distributed by Buena Vista International thru Columbia Pictures

OPENS APRIL 28
JIMMY "THE TULIP" IS BACK IN ACTION!



MTRCB RATING

Oscar winner Denzel Washington stars as Creasy, a government operative / soldier of fortune, who has pretty much given up on life.

In Mexico City, he reluctantly agrees to take a job to protect Pita (Dakota Fanning) whose parents are threatened by a wave of kidnappings. He eventually becomes close to the child and their relationship reawakens and rekindles his spirit. When Pita was kidnapped and presumed dead, his fiery rage is unleashed on those he feels responsible, and he stops at nothing to save her.

DENZEL WASHINGTON
MAN ON FIRE
www.manonfiremovie.com

Kidnapping facts in Mexico City:

- a kidnapping occurs every six hours on average
- average asking price is around $280,000 and the final payment usually negotiated to about $19,000.
- about 80 or 90 percent of the 'kidnappable' people were kidnapped
- TAXI GRAB: As many as 4,000 'express' kidnappings occur in Mexico each year. Passengers in unlicensed taxis are driven to ATMs and forced to withdraw money

OPENS APRIL 28

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MONDAY, APRIL 26, 2004

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

LIFESTYLE

May is National Heritage Month /E1

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or e-mail us at pr_lifestyle@inquirer.com.ph

Editor **Chelo Banal-Formoso**
Subsection Editor **Lito Zulueta**

Andrea Bocelli comes to Manila

We will hear not only the famed tenor but also an exciting new soprano, Maria Luigia Borsi

By Pablo A. Tariman
Contributor

THE BIG summer treat for music lovers should be the Philippine debut of Italian blind tenor Andrea Bocelli on April 30 at the Araneta Coliseum.

With Baby Arenas as its impresario, the Manila performance of Bocelli will surely bring to mind her initial triumph with Pavarotti's Manila debut in 1994.

Manilans will hear not only Bocelli but also an exciting new soprano, Maria Luigia Borsi, who was Violetta in the touring productions of "La Traviata" mounted by La Scala di Milan.

Also, Manilans will see an Italian conductor with solid credentials, Marcello Rota, who will conduct a Filipino orchestra.

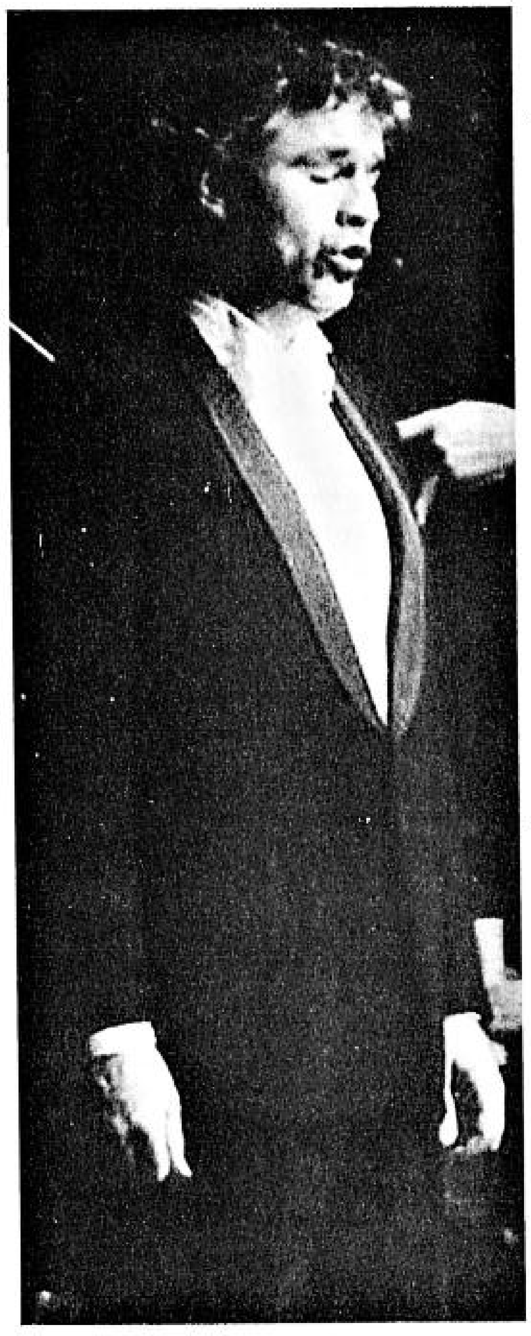
Arrivederci, Maestro Barbieri

THIS summer saw some significant transitions in the music scene and exciting performances in Manila and the provinces.

Ruggero Barbieri just performed his farewell concert of Mahler's Eighth Symphony with the Philippine Philharmonic Orchestra (PPO). He will no longer be music director and principal conductor of the country's national orchestra starting May.

The incoming music director, Eugene F. Castillo (a full-blooded Filipino), also

ANDREA/ D3



ANDREA Bocelli

The man behind the heavenly voice

THE WORLD knows him as the heavenly voice behind such classical crossovers as his duet with Celine Dion, "The Prayer."

Meet Andrea Bocelli, the blind tenor who has emerged as one of the most famous and sought-after Italian artists today.

Born on Sept. 22, 1958, Andrea ("Andrea" is Italian for "Andrew") Bocelli was a born musician, already playing the organ in his parish church when he was six.

His poor vision, brought upon by congenital glaucoma, led quickly to blindness by the time he was 12, after he received an unfortunate hit to the head during a soccer game.

Bocelli refused to let his limitations restrict him. He studied law at the University of Pisa, but left it for his true love—music.

Bocelli was discovered by Italy's top rock star, Zucchero, who hired Bocelli to make a demo tape with him in the hopes that the demo would attract Pavarotti to duet with the rocker on the album.

Zucchero was surprised to hear Pavarotti singing the praises of this unknown tenor who "sings with his soul." Pavarotti added, "Who is this fellow? You don't need me! He can do better!"

By 1994, Bocelli had a gold record for his debut album, "Il Mare Calmo della Sera." He had the chance to duet with Pavarotti in the benefit concert "Pavarotti International," in Modena.

He also faced his toughest audience that year, as he made his opera debut in "Macbeth," and performed before the Pope in St. Peter's Basilica.

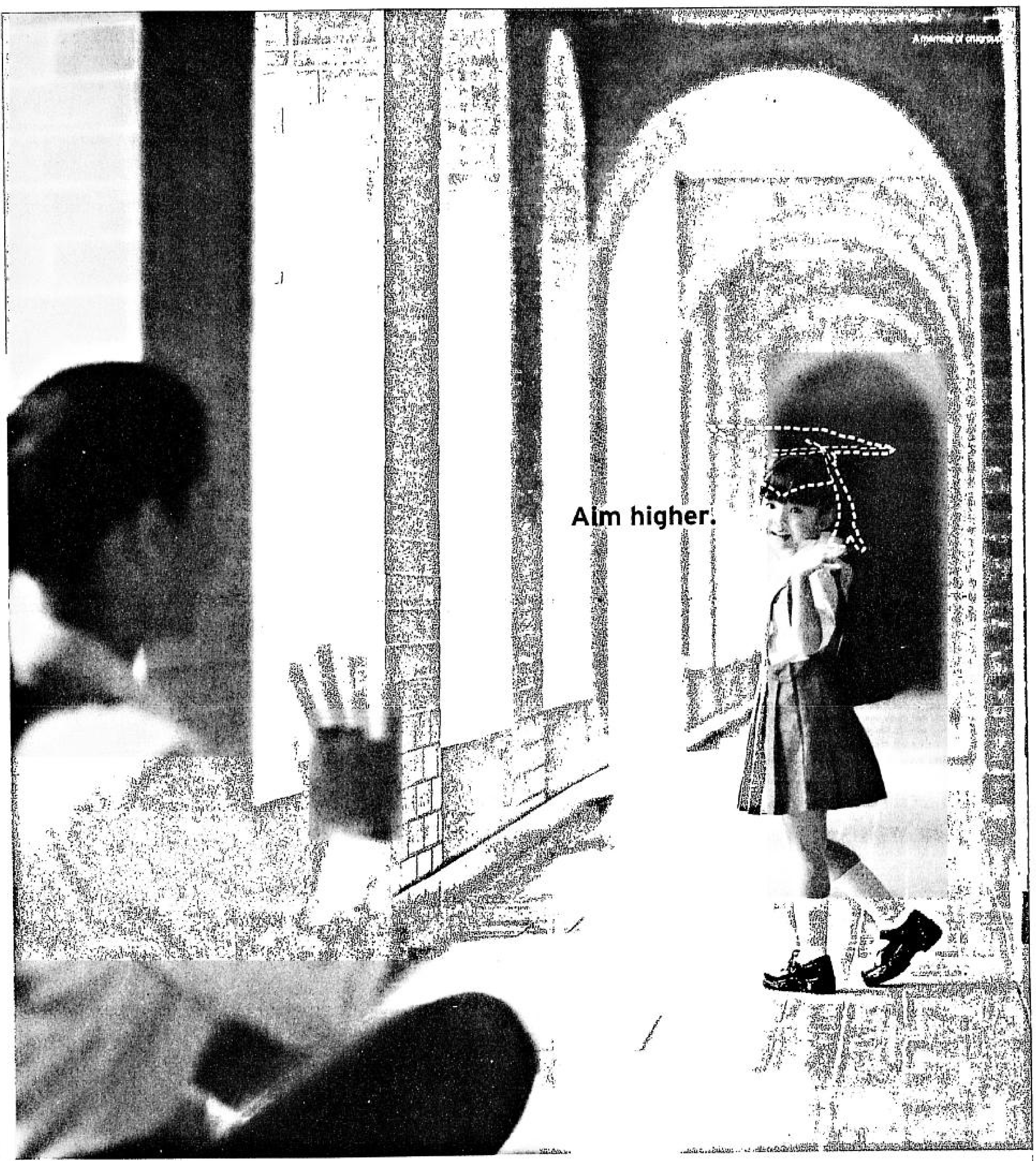
International fame followed with two duets. In 1996, English soprano Sarah Brightman invited Bocelli to sing with her "Time to Say Goodbye," recorded with the London Symphony Orchestra.

The record broke all sales records in Europe and stayed on Germany's top 10 for six months.

"The Prayer," sung with pop diva Celine Dion, was released in 1998 and became an Oscar-nominated hit. It brought Bocelli to the attention of music fans across a wide demographic range.

Elizabeth Taylor later requested Bocelli to perform on a TV tribute to her in 2000.

"Andrea Bocelli: Live in Manila" is presented by ABS-CBN. Tickets are available at the Mandarin Oriental (7508888), Araneta Ticketron and TicketNet. The concert will benefit the Padre Pio Lend-a-Hand Foundation, Bantay-Bata, Philippine National Red Cross, Ateneo AHS '79 Foundation and Mt. Pinatubo Hidden Temple Shrine Foundation in Zambales.



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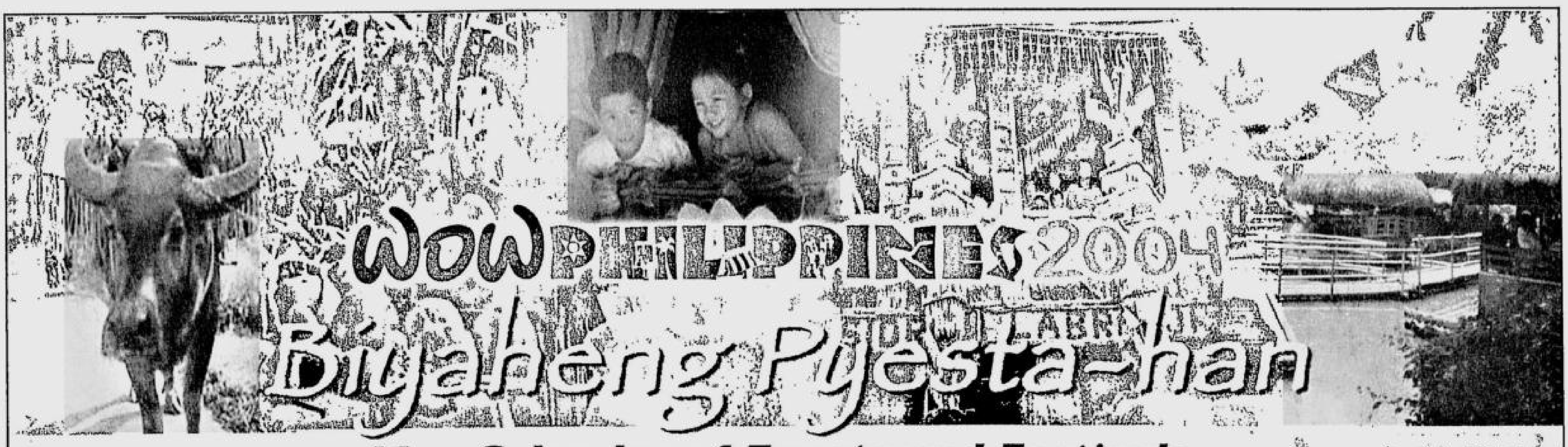

May Calendar of Events and Festivals

MAJOR EVENTS

Z CARD
On-going – June 30 | Fiestamall

Copies of the Z Card are being distributed at the departure areas of Terminals 1 and 2 and also in Mactan Airport. The said Z Cards will contain info on shopping privileges, promos, upcoming events, merchandise, and discount coupons that can be used at Fiestamall.
Contact: Duty Free Philippines, Tel. #: 879-3541 and Fax #: 879-3667

FIESTA SA FIESTAMALL
May 01 – May 30 | Fiestamall

Since it is the time for festivities, Duty Free Philippines will be showcasing different summer activities for the DFP shoppers to enjoy. There will be "Carnival Rides", "Palaro", "Ati-atihan", "Choco Fair", "Free Photo at the Choco House" and "Food Festival". These will serve as a come on to shoppers during summer.
Contact: Duty Free Philippines, Tel. #: 879-3541 and Fax #: 879-3667

CIBUS (SEA-BOOZE: SUBIC SPELLED BACKWARDS)
May 01 | Boardwalk Beach Resort, Subic, Zambales

A summer beach party based on European type of events such as the IBIZA parties in Morocco , Rio de Janeiro, Paris, Milan and London in a summer tropical setting. This event will include numerous all day and all night activities such as live music, with guest celebrities and show bands from Manila to party all night long.
Contact: Ms. Helen V. Pacioles, Tel. #: 721-1303 and 721-9591

SEARCH FOR MAYFLOWER QUEEN
May 01 | Alubijid, Misamis Oriental

A summer beauty pageant participated by beautiful maidens from all over the the province. Something to watch out for this summer season with a lot of wonderful sights to behold.
Contact: Mr. Tonet Batalla 088-756128

FLORES DE MAYO 2004
1st Sunday of May Rizal Park, Manila

A grand procession of different celebrities and beauty queens wearing the creation of some of the top designers in the country. It is an offshoot of the traditional Santacruzán / Flores de Mayo, which was an "offering of flowers to the Blessed Mary". Top 3 designers will be awarded for their creation after the procession. The event is organized by the Fashion Designer's Association of the Philippines (FDAP) in cooperation with the Congregacion del Santisimo Nombre del Niño Jesus.
Contact: Mr. Ben Farrales, Congregacion del Santisimo Nombre del Niño Jesus, Tel. #: 524-8439 or 525-3421

FLORES DE MAYO SA MAKATI
2nd Week of May | Glorietta Mall, Makati

One of the biggest processions in Metro Manila participated in by young ladies representing the 33 barangays of Makati, tourism-related establishments, local and government offices and corporations based in Makati. Every year, a Flower Queen" is crowned by the Mayor.
Contact: Ms. Roslainda Cervantes, Makati Museum & Cultural Office Affairs Office, Telefax: 896-2464

THE FEAST OF SAINT JOSEPH TOWN FIESTA
May 04 | Las Pinas City, Manila

The town fiesta covers five (5) barangays and is highlighted with a Banda Parada, staging of Comedia or Moro-Moro, singing contests, the novena with "prusisyon" (Paradise with Icons) and fireworks.
Contact: Mr. Jimmy Castillano, Las Pinas City Tourism and Cultural Office, Telefax: 874-1440

WOW PHILIPPINES ISLAND CARAVAN: THE NAUTICAL HIGHWAY ADVENTURE (THIRD LEG)
May 15-19 | Manila-Batangas-Puerto Galera-Calapan-Roxas-Caticlan-Boracay

An organized caravan tour set along the Nautical Highway System. It was organized by the consortium formed by T.R.I.P.S. Inc., Sampaguita Travel, Marsman Tours and Travel Corp, Rajah Tours, Travel Edge, Baron Travel and Annset Holidays – all prominent in the tourism industry and with a long history of experiences in handling tour operation and events as well as having a wide range of market contacts both locally and internationally. It will set the trend for traveling in the country.
Contact: Secretariat-Sampaguita Travel, Tel #'s: 892-1121/815-2173/817-7613

SANTACRUZAN WITH KUMBIRA
4th week | Rizal Blvd. Dumaguete City

Procession of biblical characters and the traditional sagalas representing the Blessed Virgin's attributes. On this festivity one can also witness the city's prettiest promenade on their finery parading followed by performing contingents. | Contact: Ms. Annie Jalandoni, City Tourism Office, Tel. #: 035-225-0549

FEAST IN HONOR OF ST. VINCENT FERRER
3rd Sunday of May (22nd) - movable

Dipolog City Fiesta celebrated with a motocross, concerts, and beauty pageants
Contact: Dipolog City Tourism Office, Tel. #: 65-212-2485

SANTACRUZAN
May 23 | Citywide (from BF to Baclaran Redemptorist)
San Dionisio, Parañaque City

It is a celebration of the discovery of Christ's true cross by Queen Helena, Mother of Constantine. May captures the festive Christian spirit with the sagalas, the town's fairest ladies in parade. They represent the Marian in her various roles. The last and the most prominent lady in the entourage portrays Queen Helena who searched for the True Cross. The boy walking alongside depicts the Queen's son, the young Constantine.
Contact: Ms. Alice Benzon, Paranaque City Cultural and Tourism Office. Telefax: 829-0691

WHITE PEAK CLIMB
May 28-31 | New Bataan, Comval

Annual climb to the province's highest peak
Contact: Provincial Tourism Office, Tel. #: 084-376-0943

FLORES DE MAYO BACOLOD
May 31 | Bacolod City Proper

This is a parade of beautiful maidens representing specific symbol of title and authority of saints.
Contact: San Sebastian Cathedral, Rizal St., Bacolod City

SANTACRUZAN
May 31 | Across Region IX

Parade of beauties with Reyna Elena carrying the cross.
Contact: All City Tourism Officers in the Region c/o DOT Regional Office for Region IX, Tel. #: 9910218

PISTAY DAYAT
May 01 | Lingayen, Pangasinan

Thanksgiving Festival for the year's bountiful harvest from the sea, celebrated every 1st of May. Various activities are lined up such as a parade that features small sea crafts and bancas decked with fish, flowers, and fruits. Another highlight is the selection of the " Limgas na Dayat" (Queen of the Sea), sand sculpting competition and exhibition by the beach.
Contact: Office of the Governor, Tel. #: 075-542-6446

MAJOR FESTIVALS

MAGAYON FESTIVAL
May 01 | Albay, Bicol

A festival in the merry month of May, showcasing Albay as it comes to age, its cultural heritage, trade, travel, and tourism beyond Majestic Mount Mayon. The festival includes various activity such as beauty pageant, photo/art exhibit, street parade, trade fair, sports fest, guided tours, etc.
Contact: Ms. Fe B. Arroyo, Provincial Tourism Officer Albay – PTCAO, Albay Astrodome Complex, Legazpi City, Tel. #: 052-480-4956/57

BAWANG FESTIVAL (GARLIC FESTIVAL)
May 01-03 | Sinait, Ilocos Sur

Sinait is known as the Garlic Center of the North. Competitions and exhibits include pinaka-GARLIC bulb (e.g. biggest garlic), longest and most creative twined garlic bulbs and the Search for the Garlic Festival Queen.
Contact: Mayor's Office, Sinait, Ilocos Sur Tel. #: 077-728-8126

SUMMER FESTIVAL
May 01-07 | Tagaytay City

Pilipinyahan: This was conceptualize by Tagaytay Tourism Council in coordination with the Local Government Unit to promote the pineapple as the most appealing agricultural product in the locality.
Santacruzan: Parade of beauties from Tourism Oriented and related establishments of the city.
Contact: Regional Office for Region IV

PAHINUNGOD FESTIVAL
May 01-10 | Calape, Bohol

A 10-day fiesta commemorating the town's rich ancestry and devotion to San Vicente Ferrer – its town saint and the Calaphenons "pahinungod" (offer) to come home annually. Highlights include the Search for Ms. Calape, a one-nights dance concert and street dancing.
Contact: Office of the Mayor, Tel. #: 38-507-9180

BALANGAY FESTIVAL
May 01-31 | Butuan City

It is a month-long fiesta celebration of Butuan City. Severa; activities are lined up for the celebration like Mutya Hong Butuan Pageant, Sports Fest, and Santacruzan.
Contact: Ms. Liwliwa B. Esguerra, City Tourism Office, Butuan City, Tel #: 085-225-4041

SALUBONG (HOLY CROSS FESTIVAL)
May 02 | Alitagtag and Bauan, Batangas

A festive celebration of meeting the Holy Cross of Bauan and Holy Cross of Alitagtag at Binakulan Shrine at 8:00am. Highlighted by the program and praises to the Holy Cross accompanied by street dancing and finally at 2:00pm the Holy Cross of Bauan returns to the Parish Church of Bauan where the jubilation culminates.
Contact: Regional Office for Region IV

CARABAO-CARROZA FESTIVAL
May 03 | Pavia, Iloilo

The festival which displays and projects Pavianhons ingenuity as a people was first started on May 03, 1973 at Aganan River. For 29 years now, it is continuously celebrated every 3rd of May (a day before the town's fiesta) and is participated in by the 18 barangays of the municipality. It consist of three main attractions, namely the Carabao-Carroza Parade. This festival also features a Carroza Race and search for CArabao-Carroza Queen.
Contact: Mayor Ervin Gerochi or Susan P. Jovero, Municipal Tourism Officer, Municipal Hall, Pavia, Iloilo, Tel #: 033-320-0039

PALONG FESTIVAL
May 10-13 | Capalonga, Camarines Norte

Highlighted by a street dancing and agro industrial fair which expresses local folks' gratitude for their town's name etymology and signifies the abundant presence of rooster available in the locality. Held also in celebration of their Black Nazarene's Feast Day on May 13.
Contact: Mr. Abel Icatlo, Provincial Tourism Officer, Provincial Capitol, Daet, Camarines Norte, Tel #: 054-721-4341, Fax: 440-2013

PAHIYAS SA LUCBAN (SAN ISIDRO FESTIVAL)
May 11-15 | Lucban, Quezon

Homes are decked with kiping (multi-colored paper thin leaf-shaped rice kropeck) palm fronds, various horticultural varieties and harvested vegetables. An impressive trade fair that showcases Quezon province's crafts, delicacies such as Longganiza Lucban. Procession of religious images of the Catholic Church notably San Isidro add more color to a feast of the senses. | Contact: Regional Office for Region IV

AGAWAN SA SARIAYA (SAN ISIDRO FESTIVAL)
May 11-15 | Sariaya, Quezon

This is a thanksgiving celebration to the Lord for the good harvest and abundance of their agricultural production. The May 15 celebration in Sariaya mirrors the townsfolk's generosity in spirit, their faith in divine providence and their ingenuity in craft production and culinary traditions. The celebration of the Sariaya folks during the feast of San Isidro Labrador makes it unique from other May 15 celebrations in the province.
Contact: Regional Ofice for Region IV

MAYOHAN SA TAYABAS (SAN ISIDRO FESTIVAL)
May 11-15 | Tayabas, Quezon

A thanksgiving event marked with agro-trade fair and the famous "Agawan ng Suman" in honor to San Isidro Labrador, patron saint of farmers, for the good harvest and abundance of agricultural produces.
Contact: Regional Office for Region IV

BALWARTE SA GUMACA (SAN ISIDRO FESTIVAL)
May 11-15 | Gumaca, Quezon

Huge arches placed on strategic locations are lavishly decorated with the most colorful farm produce, local delicacies, horticultural products, palm fronds, etc., which are offerings of the local townfolk to San Isidro, patron saint of farmers, for their bountiful harvest, good fortune and prosperity. The decors are mounted on frames that are playfully lowered and raised to the delight of guests, children and local townfolks who joyfully reach out and compete with each other to share the goodies. | Contact: Regional Office for Region IV

MANO PO SAN ROQUE FESTIVAL
May 12 | Valenzuela City

Street dancing and procession along the city's major thoroughfares in commemoration of the Feast of San Roque, highlighting the customs and traditional celebration of the festival.
Contact: Mr. Barcelito de Sotto, Valenzuela City Cultural Affairs and Tourism Development Office. Telefax: 291-0672

PULILAN CARABAO FESTIVAL
May 14 | Pulilan, Bulacan

The carabao procession featuring kneeling in front of the church of San Isidro de Labrador in Pulilan. Karitone and other vehicles decorated as floats.
Contact: Office of the Mayor, Tel. #: 044-795-0128

PANDAANAN (SAN ISIDRO FESTIVAL)
May 15 | Luisiana, Laguna

An annual celebration on honor of farmers' patron saint, San Isidro Labrador.
Contact: Regional Office for Region IV

OBANDO FERTILITY RITES
May 17, 18, and 19 | Obando, Bulacan

The main attraction is the "fertility dance" of childless couples on the streets praying that they bear children. The fiesta is observed in honor of Sta. Clara, San Pascual, and Virgen de Salambao
Contact: Office of the Mayor, Tel. #: 292-2016/3226 /

PAGSALUBOK FESTIVAL
May 17-22 | Dipolog City

Streetdances, trade fairs, motocross, and beauty pageants are held.
Contact: City Tourism Office, Dipolog City, Tel. #: 65-212-2485

SANGGUTAN FESTIVAL
May 18 | Barugo, Leyte

Honoring the age-old process of coconut wine-making. A dance of the drinkers.
Contact: Mayor Juliana Villasin, Barugo, Leyte, Tel. #: 053-331-4019

SARUNG BANGGI FESTIVAL
May 18-25 | Sto. Domingo, Albay

A fun-filled 8-day summer activity to immortalize the song "Sarung Banggi" and pay tribute to its composer Potenciano Gregorio. It showcases a variety of cultural and religious activities, food and sports fest, beauty search, folksong fest, agro-industrial fair and many more.
Contact: Office of the Mayor, Sto. Domingo, Albay, Tel. #: 052-487-1002

FARMERS FESTIVAL
May 19-20 | Bacarra, Ilocos Norte

A festival that highlights a street dance parade participated in by dressed up farmers; agro-industrial trade fair; contest of the biggest farm harvest and livestock.
Contact: Mayor's Office, Tel. #: 077-776-0576

BONTOC TOWN FIESTA
May 21 | Bontoc, Mountain Province

The oldest capital town celebrating its creation with cultural show, parade and trade fair
Contact: Ms. Mila Malla-ao, Tel. #: 074-602-1036

KAOGMA FESTIVAL
May 21-27 | Camarines Sur

A week-long celebration of the foundation anniversary of the province of Camarines Sur. The festival features numerous activities such as cultural expositions, sports events, beauty pageant, procession and grand parade.
Contact: Ms. Nena Centenera, PTCSO, Provincial Capitol, Cadlan, Pili, Camarines Sur, Tel. #: 054-477-3172, Fax: 473-0391

MANGGAHAN SA GUIMARAS FESTIVAL
May 22 | Guimaras

A commemorative celebration of the anniversary of Guimaras as a province and to showcase the premier produce of the province, which is "mango", and the various local attractions. Highlighted by street dancing, a technology fair, cultural presentations, painting and drawing contests, selection of mango bulilit queen, a marathon race and many more.
Contact: Gov. JC Rahman Nava, Provincial Capitol, Jordan, Guimaras or Ms. Angie Gabinete, Provincial Tourism Officer at 0919-409-0878

LUBI-LUBI FESTIVAL
May 22 | Gingoog City

A unique festival whose contingents are dressed up in indigenous creations made of coconut products/coincides with the city fiesta celebration, in honor of Patroness Saint, Santa Rita de Cascia.
Contact: Mr. Audie S. Ocampo, Gingoog City Tourism Officer, Tel #: 088-861-4219

ADVENTURE RACE : "SAGAWAK FESTIVAL"
May 23-28 | Malalag, Davao del Sur

Mountain Bike Competition and Cultural Festival
Contact: Provincial Tourism Office, Tel. #: 082-553-2075

PAHOY-PAHOY FESTIVAL
May 25 | Calbiga, Samar

Grand Parade of colorful scarecrows and street dancing
Contact: Mayor Melchor Nacario, Tel. #: 053-541-9853 and 02-435-0047, Cell. 0919-839-3787

BULAKLAKAN SA GENSAN (STA. CRUZAN FESTIVAL)
May 29-30 | General Santos City

A Santa Cruzan Festival. Paseo de Flores: Sagalas and Archs selection of the best in Bulaklakan sa Gensan.
Contact: Mr. Warren Manilay, City Tourism Officer, Office of the Mayor, General Santos City, Tel. #: 083-552-5250 / Director Sohura T. Dimaampao, DOT Region 12, 2/F Comse Bldg., Quezon Ave., Cotobato City, Tel. #: 064-421-7868

TAPUSAN
May 31 | Alitagtag, Batangas

Tapusan honors the Holy Cross on the last day of May. Floral offerings are laid at the foot of the cross during the afternoon ceremonies in the town church. The observance peaks in the 31st of May with a colorful procession during which the cross is mounted on a gaily decorated float, together with other floats swathed with lights, silken fabrics and freshly cut blooms to honor the various Marian images.
Contact: Regional Office for Region IV

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GANDA NG PILIPINAS, GALING NG PILIPINO!

CECILE Licad performing during the Ayala anniversary

EDWIN BACASMAS

AYALAS CHEER LICAD. Jaime Augusto, Kit, Fernando and Jaime Zobel

Andrea Bocelli comes to Manila

From page D1

gave his farewell concert with the Camellia Symphony in Sacramento, California, and prepared to begin his term as new music director and principal conductor of the Philippine Philharmonic.

Castillo made his grand entrance in Manila's music scene with his first partnership with Cecile Licad, who was soloist of the San Miguel Philharmonic in a dazzling performance of Ravel's Concerto in G.

The event was Ayala Corp.'s 170th anniversary. A grand stage was built on the grounds of Tower 1 along Ayala Avenue.

That evening, the massive crowd was reminiscent of the audience that trooped to the Cultural Center of the Philippines for the second visit of the New York Philharmonic.

To do full justice to Licad's performance, Don Jaime Zobel ordered both lanes of Ayala Avenue closed.

As expected, Licad and Castillo got a standing ovation, and Manila's music lovers got a grand preview of what was in store for PPO subscribers in the new season of the Philippine Philharmonic under Castillo.

Observing him in his first rehearsal with Licad, I got a first-hand view of the quality of musicianship of this young Filipino conductor. No Filipino conductor past and present has the energy and focus of Castillo. Licad liked him instantly.

The vibes and team-up of the two world-class Filipino musicians were perfect.

"To me, Castillo will become the next good thing that will happen in Manila's music scene in the next few years," Licad told media people.

This summer, Licad dominated the music scene in Metro Manila and Baguio City.

After her mesmerizing Ravel with the San Miguel Philharmonic, she did five more engagements as a recitalist.

In an evening of Schumann, Liszt, Beethoven and Chopin, Licad, after an absence of 15 years, got not just one but three standing ovations at the Camp John Hay Trade and Cultural Center in the country's summer capital.

In other concerts, Licad raised funds for a music camp in Tanay, Rizal; and for abandoned babies and abused minors in a concert at the CCP.

She closed the 3rd Pasig Summer Music Festival at the Pasig Museum, where the audience screamed her name again as they gave her a standing ovation. She actually broke her own record for encores by giving seven at the Pasig Museum!

SOPRANO Maria Luigia Borsi

CONDUCTOR Eugene Castillo (left, seated) with award-winning film scorer Nonong Buencamino, Tess Villacorta of Ayala Corp., Marilou Diaz-Abaya and Ryan Cayabyab, after a triumphant Ravel concerto at Ayala Tower One

Concerto prize

The last good news for summer is that Namcya (National Music Competition for Young Artists) winner Oliver Salonga, now a full scholar at Lynn University in Florida, won his second concerto competition outside his school and got $1,000 as cash prize for Rachmaninof 2.

When Salonga played Beethoven's "Apassionata" during the winners' night, the donor of the cash prize was so excited he added another $500 to Salonga's prize.

His Rach 2 will be heard in June in Manila and the provinces when he comes home for a vacation.

'Euro-pino'. . .

From page D4

MORRIS

But while this International School student feels like she simply "blends in with the crowd," this is not the case on stage.

"My character is not used to not getting what she wants," Bianca says. As the play progresses from one hilarious twist to another, "she gets mad, frustrated and really determined more and more," adding electricity to the plot.

"The play is fun," she says.

Bianca also enjoys working with Rep's senior actors.

"Being around your idols makes you learn tons of stuff," she explains. "Jeremy Domingo, who plays my Uncle Stanley, is fantastic. I can't stop laughing at the little things he does. His whole character is funny—all energy from beginning to end."

Then there's Faustmann. "He's brilliant. He acted the lead role, directed, and designed the set all at the same time! His facial expressions, energy and whole character are amazing."

Bianca first trained at the Rep Summer Theater Workshop when she was 11. At the time a fragile-looking girl, she took on the rigors and challenges of professional acting.

She then auditioned for "The Secret Garden," Rep's 2001 grand musical, and landed a major role, playing the touching, sickly boy Colin (yup, a boy role!)

She has also done Shakespeare's "A Midsummer's Night Dream" and other plays with Rep. She will soon be seen in the title role of "Pinocchio," Rep's Children's Theater offering for this year.

"Theater is so liberating," she says, "like riding a horse is so liberating."

She should know. Bianca has taken four years of equestrian lessons. "When you know how to ride, to control your horse and it starts prancing... I just love it! In theater, meanwhile, you learn to trust—like you trust a horse—and put on different masks and overcome your shyness."

"Like my mom says, being in Rep is like having an education. I've learned hundreds of lessons by just being around different people and my mentors here. And my dream is to continue to bring entertainment to Filipinos and others elsewhere," she says.

Repertory Philippines presents "Caught in the Net" by Ray Cooney, directed by Miguel Faustmann, April 23, 24, 30 and May 1 at 8 p.m.; April 25 and May 2 at 2:30 p.m. in Rep's Globe Theater at Onstage, Greenbelt 1, Paseo de Roxas, Makati City. Call 8870710.

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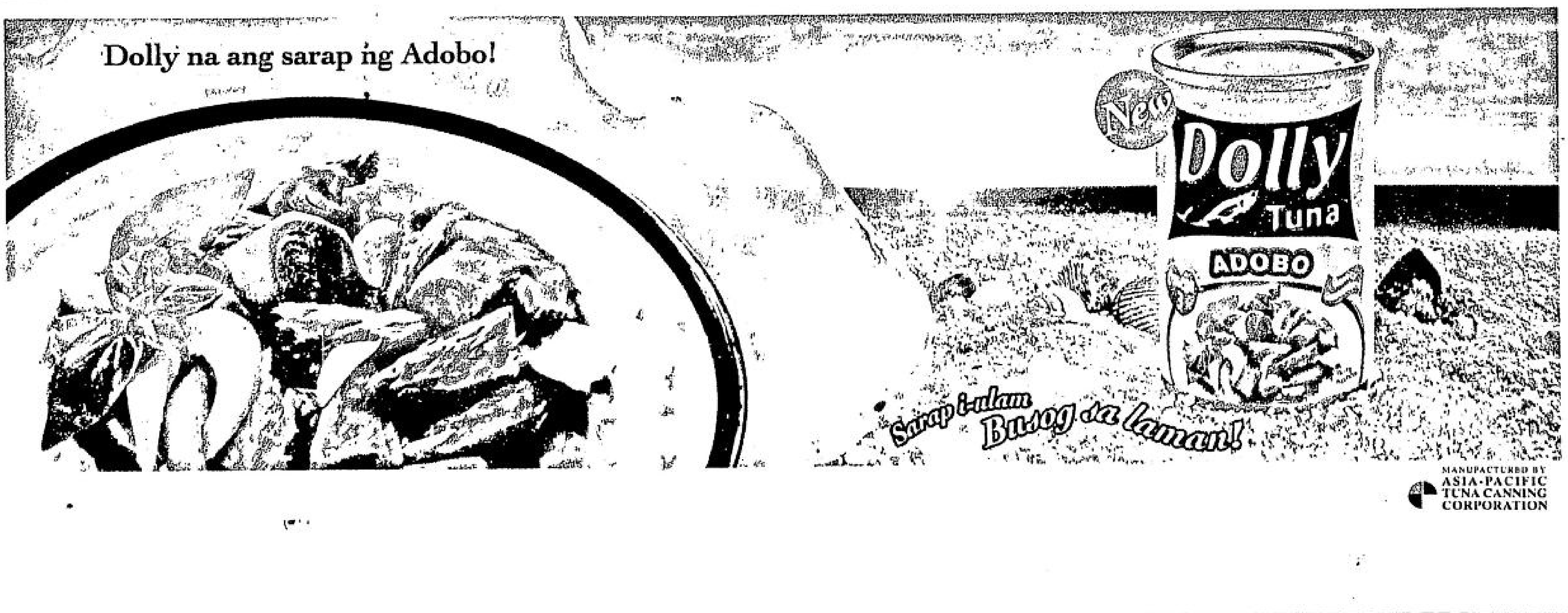

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'Euro-pino' teen comes of age on stage

By George T. Ramos
Contributor

IN this age when the world has truly become a village, young people whose parents are of different races—Eurasians, particularly—are becoming more and more commonplace. With their unique looks, a good many are walking down the runways of Paris and Milan and have started entering the movies.

Exciting teen actress Bianca Morris, 15, a product of Repertory Philippines' Summer Theater Workshop and a regular talent, is Eurasian or "Euro-pino." She has a British dad and a Filipino mom.

"My dad comes from Liverpool in England. but he is not related to the Beatles. He loves them a lot though," she says.

Appropriately enough, Bianca plays English teenager Vicki Smith in Rep's ongoing comedy, "Caught in the Net," which is set in the heart of London suburbia.

In the wacky play, she is the daughter of bigamist taxi driver John Smith (Miguel Faustmann) who unsuspectingly sets up a date with her brother (Niccolo Manahan), from her dad's other family, which she knows nothing about. It's a date that her dad will go to whatever laughable lengths to prevent.

Simple and studious

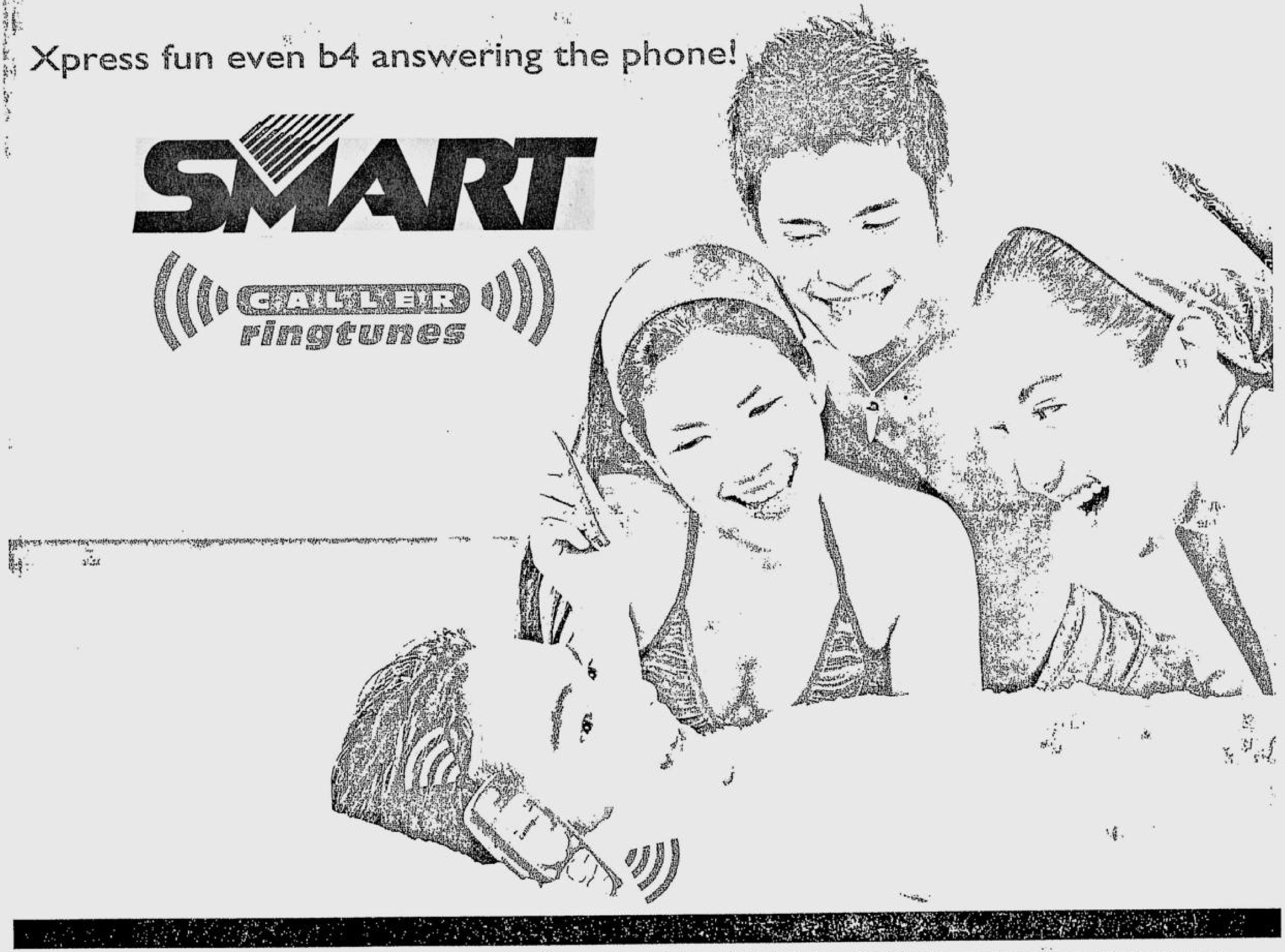
Being Eurasian is no big shakes to Bianca. She says, "I wouldn't call myself fashionable. I'm really a simple and studious person and I'm not at all into the modern music that's coming out nowadays. My taste for music is kind of weird."

She goes for Norah Jones, who sports a husky voice and a dreamy jazz sound. She also loves Lea Salonga, whose crystal-clear, beautiful voice makes Bianca proud to be a Filipino.

'EURO-PINO'/D3

Student-actress Bianca Morris, 15, plays English teenager Vicki Smith in Rep's ongoing comedy, 'Caught in the Net'

BIANCA Morris with Miguel Faustmann andNiccolo Manahan in "Caught in the Net"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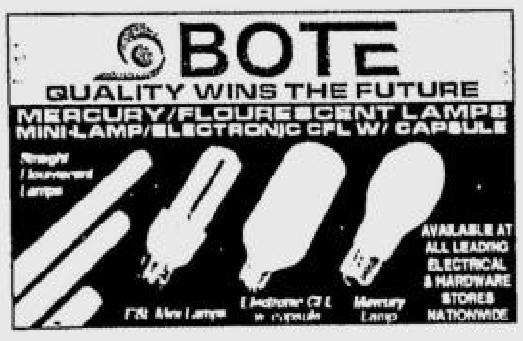
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ST. PETER the Apostle Parish Church in Loboc, the second oldest in Bohol, will host the festival's opening program.

Happy Heritage Month!

By Allison W. Lopez

THERE were the rains in September, and now the May elections. Still, no matter the hurdles, conservation loyalists are ready to brave hell and high water to push through with the celebration of the National Heritage Month this May.

"It is a difficulty for us that it coincides with this year's elections," admits Evelyn Pantig, chair of the National Commission for Culture and the Arts, a co-organizer of the event. "Still, we will continue (with the event) to stir awareness for heritage preservation."

Earlier, the SARS epidemic around May last year prompted the organizers to move the celebration to September. The weather then proved to be a problem, says festival director Anton Juan, who likened the culminating spectacle of vintas from Zamboanga on a rough Manila Bay to "toothpicks in the sea."

Festive mood

Declared as National Heritage Month through Presidential Proclamation No. 439, May was chosen precisely for its fiesta mood and sunny weather. Bambi Harper, a member of the organizing committee, says the proclamation helped in promoting their cause but "it would be better if it became a law so a budget will be provided."

This year's festival puts Bohol on center stage, and rightly so. The island, now a byword among tourists for its natural and cultural heritage sites, will host the opening on April 30-May 1. Various activities will be held, such as the unveiling of a historical landmark for the Church of Santisima Trinidad in Loay, painting and photo exhibits, organ concerts, an outdoor theater presentation and a historical tour.

A High Mass will again mark the start of the festival, this time with an array of choirs, including the acclaimed Loboc Children's Choir, singing the 19th-century Misa Baclayana. "Tubod: The Heart of Bohol," a coffeetable book published by the NCCA, will be launched after the Mass in the ancestral house of the Rocha Family.

"We decided to officially launch the festival in Bohol to decentralize from urban Manila and give focus to the other regions," says Juan, who emphasizes the "Unity through Heritage" theme of this year's festival.

Instead, a Flores de Mayo parade from Rockwell to Greenbelt Church in Makati City will serve as the opener in the National Capital Region on May 3. "Tibag," the play from which the present Santacruzan evolved, will then be staged in Greenbelt 3.

Exciting new events spice up this year's festival. The first painting competition sponsored by the Government Security Insurance System (GSIS), in cooperation with the Art Association of the Philippines, will be launched on May 21, simultaneous with GSIS' 67th anniversary celebration.

Intriguing exhibit

Meanwhile, the Parian Trade Fair on May 15-16 will offer a taste of everything Chinese and Filipino in Arroceros, Manila, the site of the original Parian or Manila's first Chinese community and trading center. Organized by the Federation of Filipino-Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry Inc., Chinese astrologers, feng shui experts, and dragon and lion dancers will regale the crowd.

"Mga Lihim ng Baul," an intriguing exhibit featuring the secrets inside the treasure chests of Dr. Jaime Laya, Gilda Cordero-Fernando, Susan Calo-Medina and Babygirl Fricke, will be held at the 4/F of SM Megamall from May 22-29.

A collection of heritage stamps will also be launched at the Central Post Office. These will show architectural treasures in Manila such as the El Hogar Building, Hongkong Shanghai Building, Uychaco Building, Luneta Hotel, Metropolitan Theater, Regina Building, and the University of Manila. The Pangasinan Capitol Building in Lingayen was the only provincial structure included in the list.

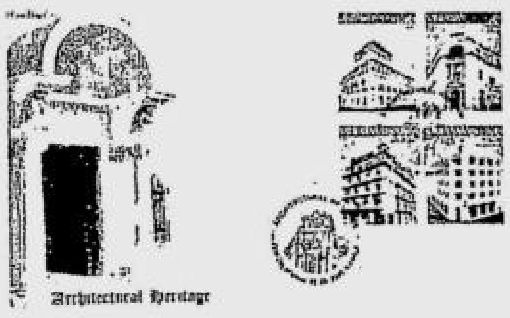
A repeat of the successful photo tilt will be held, this time centering on people and their special relationship to their heritage. Entries to the 2003 contest will be displayed at the Ever Gotesco Mall, while the exhibit and awarding ceremony for this year's competition will be at Shangri-La Plaza Mall.

"These events may be forgotten after it is held," says Harper. "But a more lasting tribute will be the Wall of Remembrance, which contains the names of our forgotten Katipunan heroes." Spearheaded by the National Historical Institute, the wall will be erected at the Luneta Park on May 28.

Concerts in Rizal, Negros Occidental and Makati fill up the festival calendar. "Pag-ibig, Pag-ibig at Pag-ibig pa rin," a romantic concert of *kundimans* and *uyayis*, will be the grand finale on May 31 at the Nuestra Señora de la Gracia Church in Guadalupe, Makati. And throughout the month, a celebration of the rich Filipino cuisine will also be held in participating restos and hotels.

Since government support is vital to the fight for heritage conservation, organizers hope the festival will serve as a reminder to everyone—politicians above all, since they have the power to effect change—who have been remiss in their duty to protect the country's heritage to seize the moment now.

"TUBOD:The Heart of Bohol" will be launched during the festival.



MANILA'S architectural treasures will be shown in a new series of postage stamps.

PEOPLE and their special relationship to their heritage is the theme of this year's photo tilt.

May promises to be a showcase and a reminder of everything that makes us truly Filipino

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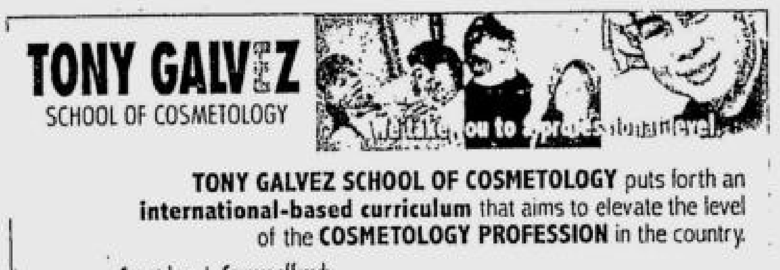
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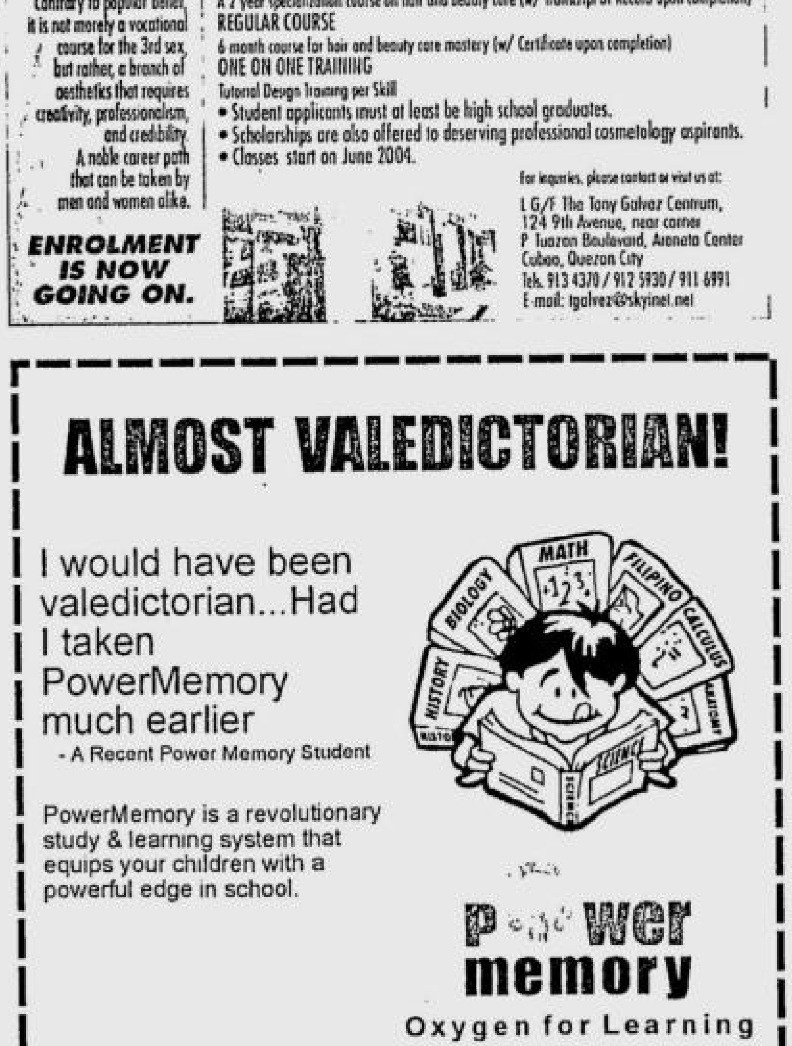
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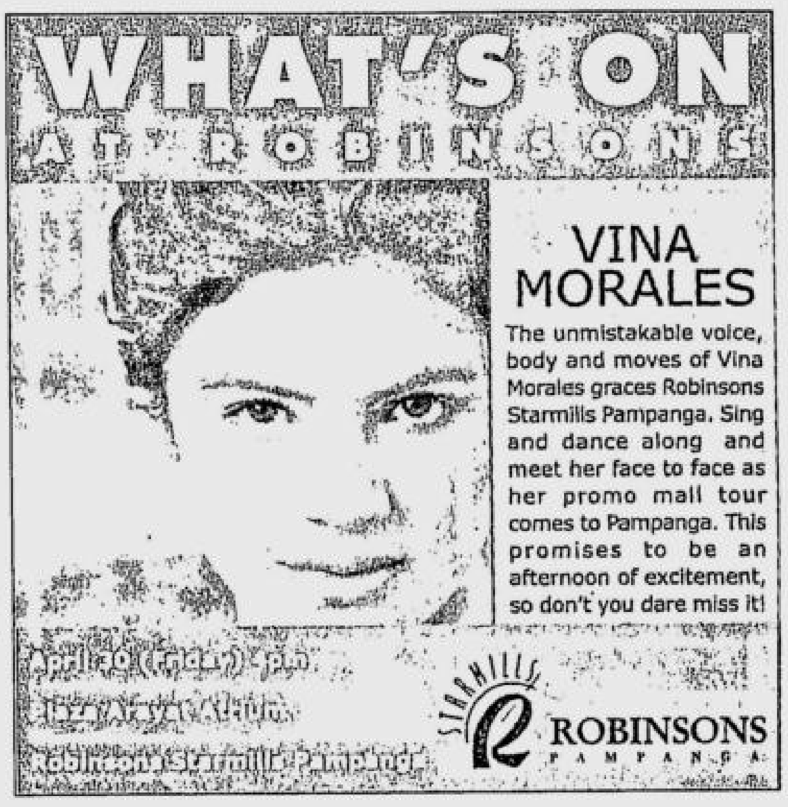
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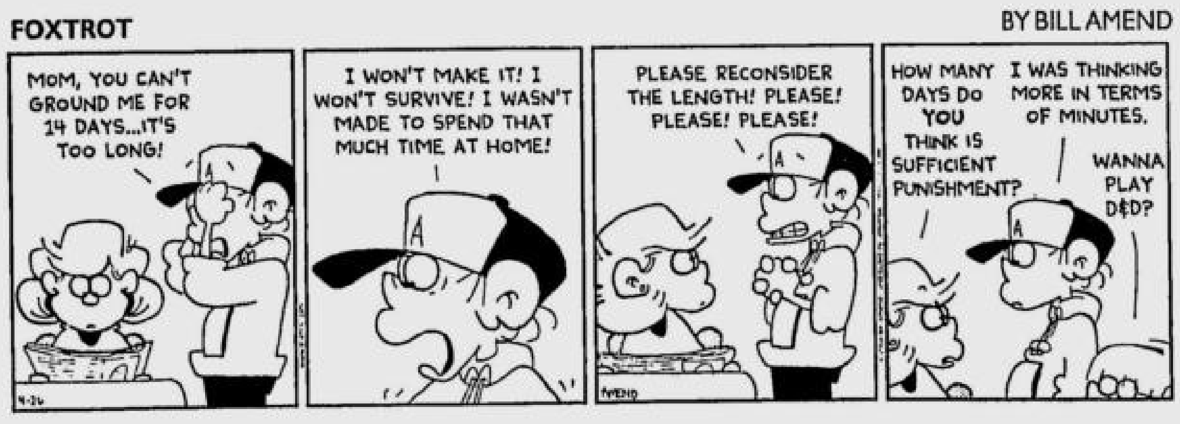
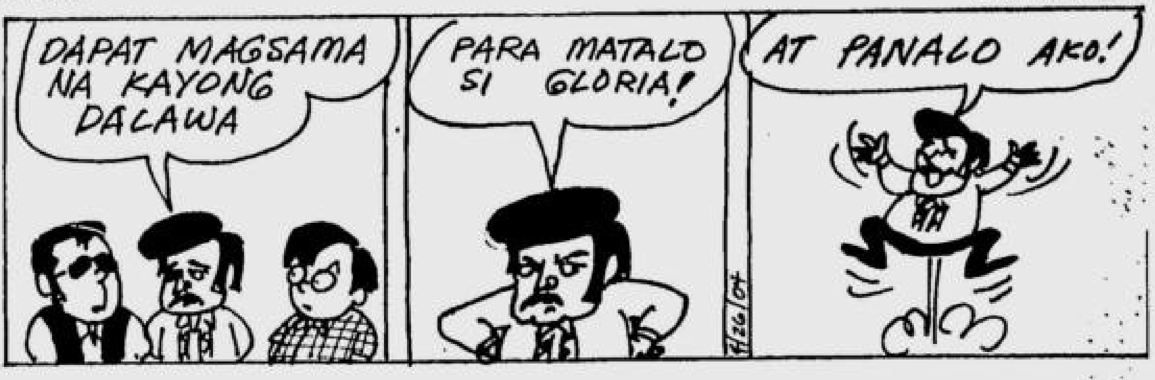
BY BILL AMEND


MOM, YOU CAN'T GROUND ME FOR 14 DAYS...IT'S TOO LONG!
I WON'T MAKE IT! I WON'T SURVIVE! I WASN'T MADE TO SPEND THAT MUCH TIME AT HOME!
PLEASE RECONSIDER THE LENGTH! PLEASE! PLEASE! PLEASE!
HOW MANY DAYS DO YOU THINK IS SUFFICIENT PUNISHMENT?
I WAS THINKING MORE IN TERMS OF MINUTES.
WANNA PLAY D&D?
4-26
AMEND

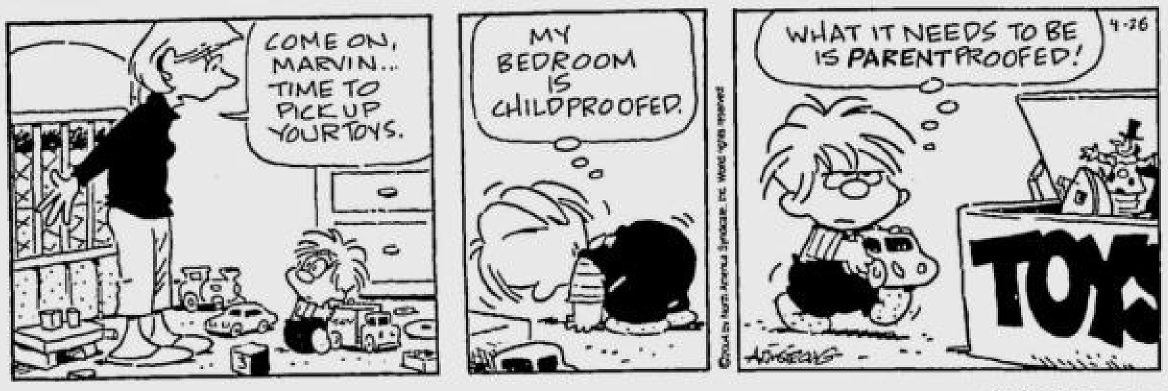
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


DAPAT MAGSAMA NA KAYONG DALAWA
PARA MATALO SI GLORIA!
AT PANALO AKO!
4/26/04

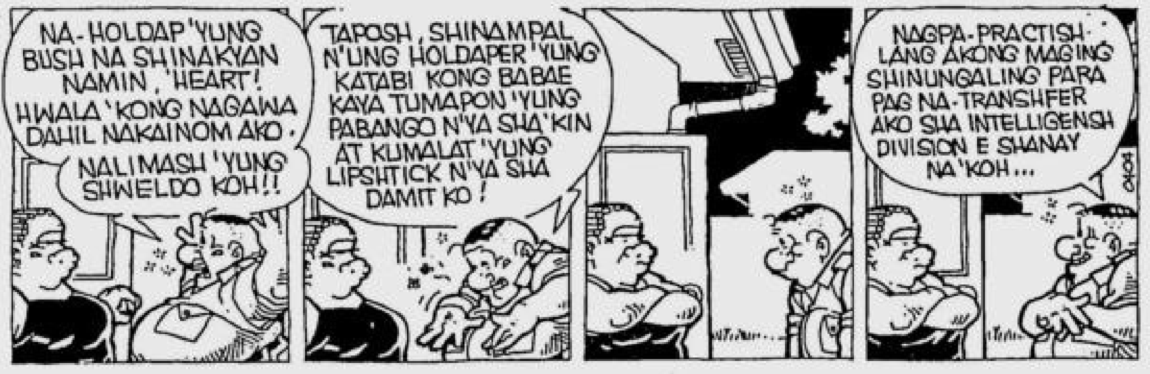
MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG


COME ON, MARVIN... TIME TO PICK UP YOUR TOYS.
MY BEDROOM IS CHILDPROOFED.
WHAT IT NEEDS TO BE IS PARENTPROOFED!
4-26
TOYS
ARMSTRONG

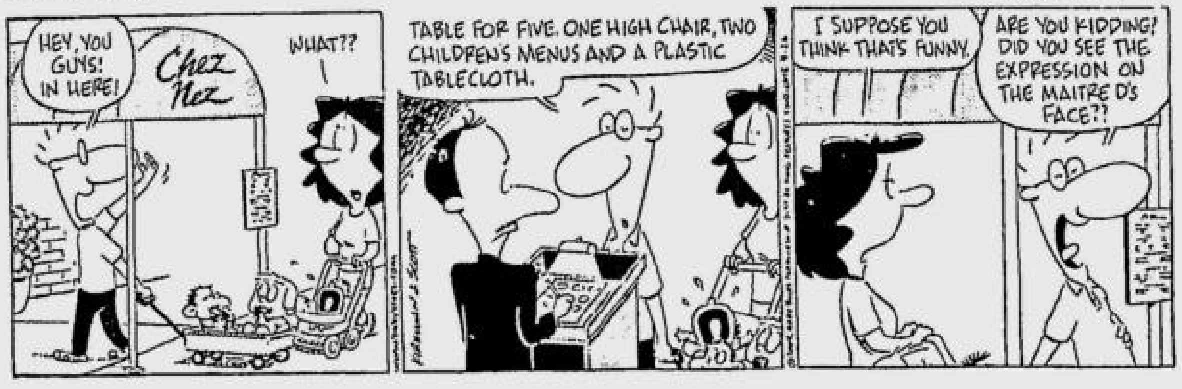
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


NA-HOLDAP 'YUNG BUSH NA SHINAKYAN NAMIN, 'HEART'! HWALA 'KONG NAGAWA DAHIL NAKAINOM AKO.
NALIMASH 'YUNG SHWELDO KOH!!
TAPOSH, SHINAMPAL N'UNG HOLDAPER 'YUNG KATABI KONG BABAE KAYA TUMAPON 'YUNG PABANGO N'YA SHA'KIN AT KUMALAT 'YUNG LIPSHTICK N'YA SHA DAMIT KO!
NAGPA-PRACTISH LANG AKONG MAGING SHINUNGALING PARA PAG NA-TRANSHFER AKO SHA INTELLIGENSH DIVISION E SHANAY NA'KOH...

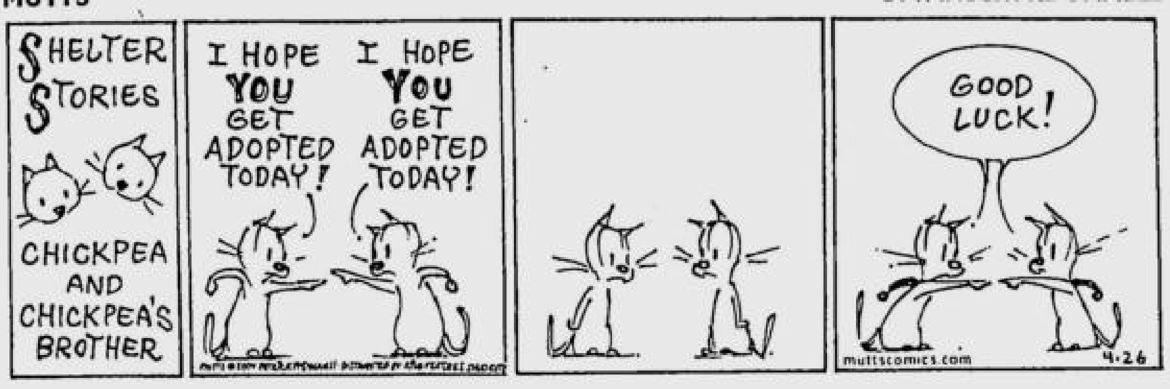
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


HEY, YOU GUYS! IN HERE!
Chez Nez
WHAT??
TABLE FOR FIVE. ONE HIGH CHAIR, TWO CHILDREN'S MENUS AND A PLASTIC TABLECLOTH.
I SUPPOSE YOU THINK THAT'S FUNNY.
ARE YOU KIDDING! DID YOU SEE THE EXPRESSION ON THE MAITRE D'S FACE??

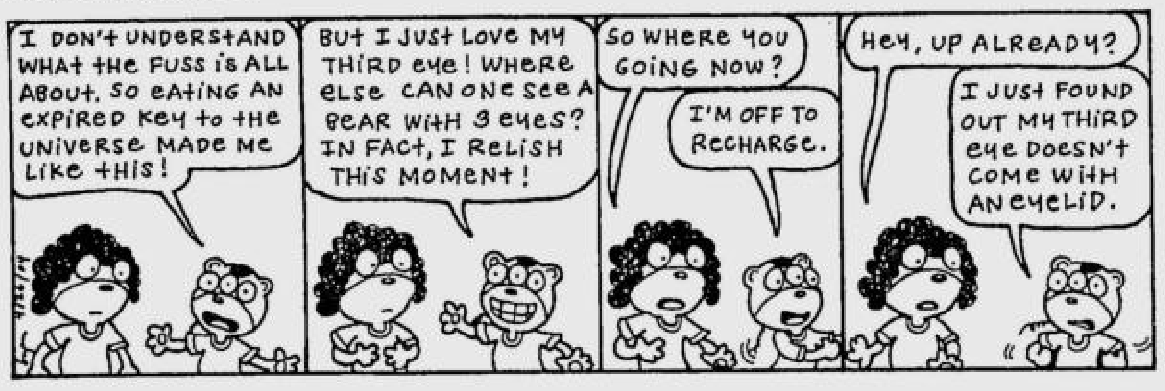
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


SHELTER STORIES
CHICKPEA AND CHICKPEA'S BROTHER
I HOPE YOU GET ADOPTED TODAY!
I HOPE YOU GET ADOPTED TODAY!
GOOD LUCK!
muttscomics.com
4-26

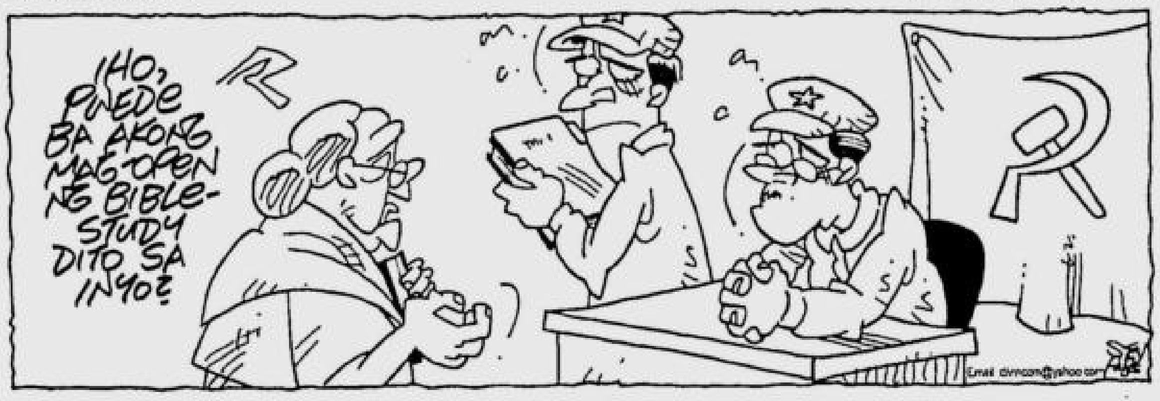
ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHAT THE FUSS IS ALL ABOUT. SO EATING AN EXPIRED KEY TO THE UNIVERSE MADE ME LIKE THIS!
BUT I JUST LOVE MY THIRD EYE! WHERE ELSE CAN ONE SEE A BEAR WITH 3 EYES? IN FACT, I RELISH THIS MOMENT!
SO WHERE YOU GOING NOW?
I'M OFF TO RECHARGE.
HEY, UP ALREADY?
I JUST FOUND OUT MY THIRD EYE DOESN'T COME WITH AN EYELID.

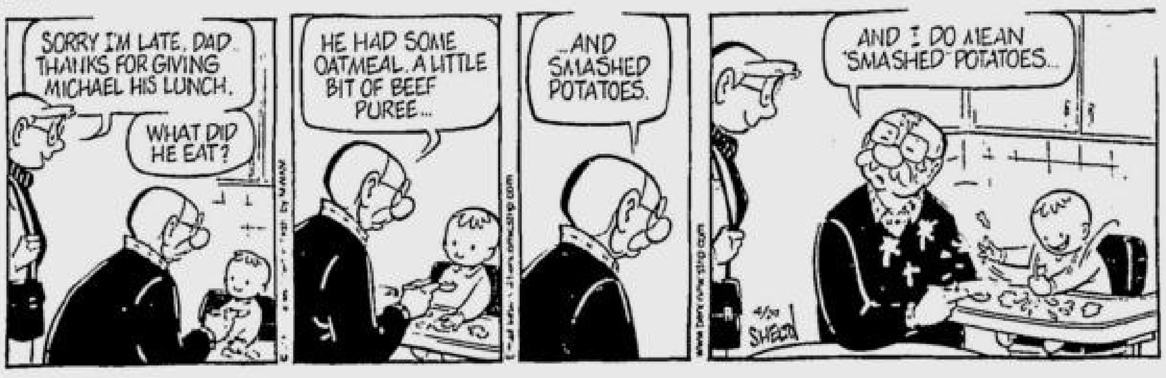
DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS


HO, PWEDE BA AKONG MAG-OPEN NG BIBLE-STUDY DITO SA INYO?

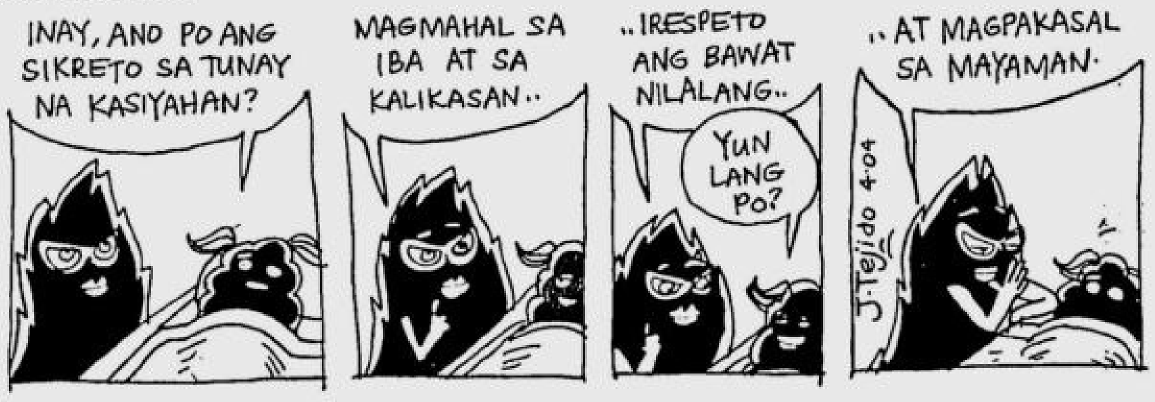
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


SORRY I'M LATE, DAD. THANKS FOR GIVING MICHAEL HIS LUNCH.
WHAT DID HE EAT?
HE HAD SOME OATMEAL, A LITTLE BIT OF BEEF PUREE...
...AND SMASHED POTATOES.
AND I DO MEAN "SMASHED" POTATOES...
SHELTON

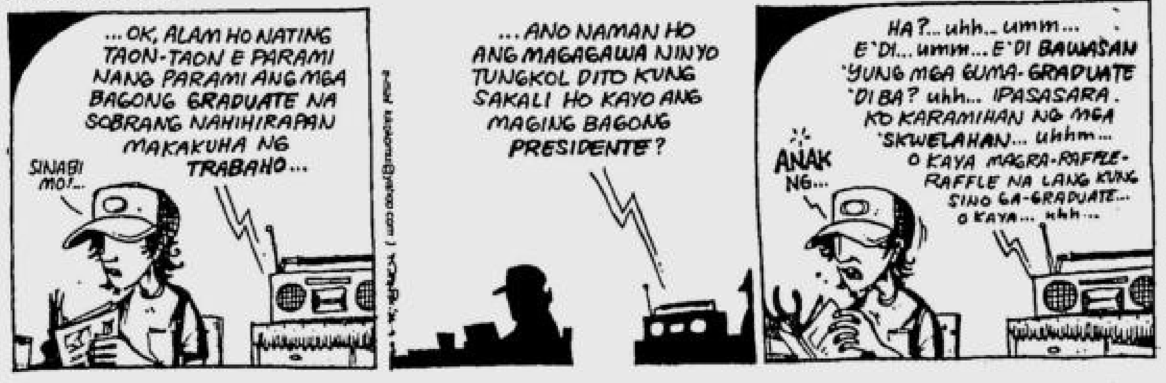
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


INAY, ANO PO ANG SIKRETO SA TUNAY NA KASIYAHAN?
MAGMAHAL SA IBA AT SA KALIKASAN..
..IRESPETO ANG BAWAT NILALANG..
YUN LANG PO?
..AT MAGPAKASAL SA MAYAMAN.
J. Tejido 4-04

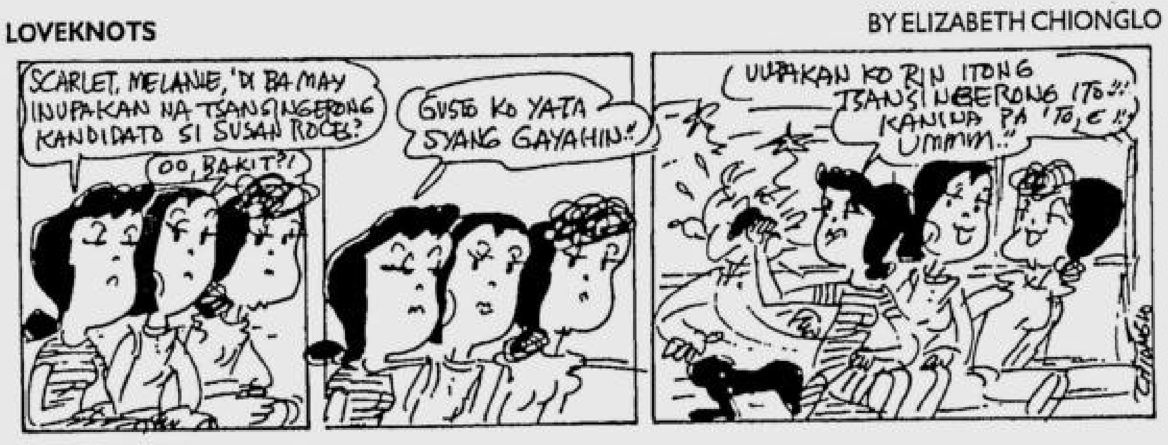
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


...OK, ALAM HO NATING TAON-TAON E PARAMI NANG PARAMI ANG MGA BAGONG GRADUATE NA SOBRANG NAHIHIRAPAN MAKAKUHA NG TRABAHO...
SINABI MO!...
...ANO NAMAN HO ANG MAGAGAWA NINYO TUNGKOL DITO KUNG SAKALI HO KAYO ANG MAGING BAGONG PRESIDENTE?
HA?... uhh... umm... E'DI... umm... E'DI BAWASAN 'YUNG MGA GUMA-GRADUATE 'DI BA? uhh... IPASASARA KO KARAMIHAN NG MGA 'SKWELAHAN... uhhm... O KAYA MAGRA-RAFFLE-RAFFLE NA LANG KUNG SINO GA-GRADUATE... O KAYA... uhh...
ANAK NG...

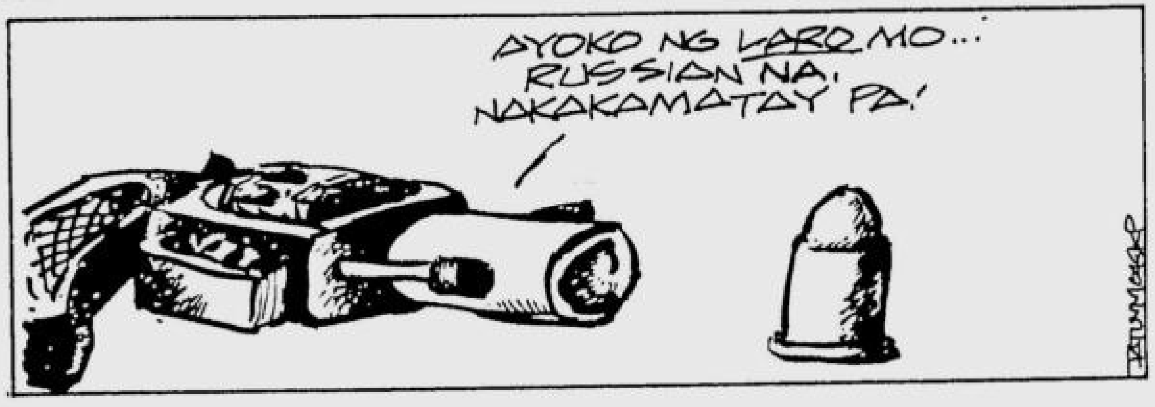
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


SCARLET, MELANIE, 'DI BA MAY INUPAKAN NA TSANSINGERONG KANDIDATO SI SUSAN ROCES?
OO, BAKIT?!
GUSTO KO YATA SYANG GAYAHIN!
UUPAKAN KO RIN ITONG TSANSINGERONG ITO!! KANINA PA 'TO, E!! UMMM..!

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


AYOKO NG LARO MO... RUSSIAN NA, NAKAKAMATAY PA!

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You are independent, stalwart and strong. You know what you want and are dedicated to pursuing it. Many of you enjoy pristine nature and create beautiful gardens. You work today for the rewards of tomorrow. Prepare to wrap up and leave some aspects of your life this year. A major nine-year cycle is ending for you now.

Birthdate of: Jet Li, martial artist/actor; Carol Burnett, comedian/actress; Giancarlo Esposito, actor.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Although your focus is on home, family and domestic issues right now, this is a poor day to make important decisions or purchases. Wait until tomorrow.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Warning: Today is a poor day to make big purchases. Whatever you buy will have to be exchanged or modified in some way. Choose any other day this week to spend your money.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Be careful about commitments and agreements made at work today. Whatever plans you initiate today will have to be modified later.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Although the Moon is in your sign today, it is void-of-course, which means whatever you initiate will tend not to fulfill its purpose. Just coast. Hold off on major plans.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): The Sun continues to be at high noon in your chart, which means you're in the limelight. Friends are helpful to you now. Be open to suggestions.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): This is a good day to finish past business connected with bills, debt, taxes, insurance matters and disputes about shared property. However, it's a poor day to sign contracts or important papers.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): You have a strong desire to travel and explore your world! Today is a poor day to make travel reservations or book your ticket anywhere. Wait until tomorrow.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Partnerships and close friendships are particularly important to you this week. Be careful about promises you make to anyone today. Your thinking might be a bit fuzzy.

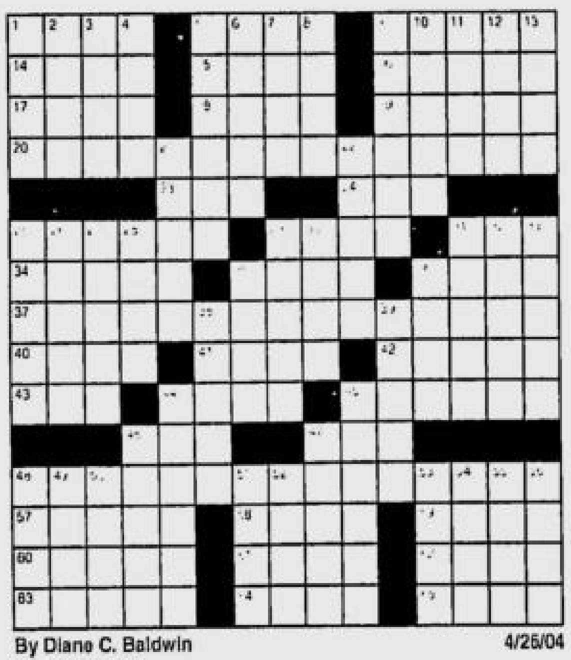
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Expect shortages and delays at work today. Checks in the mail might also be late. Just attend to business as usual.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): This is a wonderful day for creative activity. Your mind is thinking outside of the box. Original, innovative ideas occur to you easily.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): This is an excellent day to putter around home or have important discussions with family members. However, avoid important commitments or making final decisions.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Your creative output is excellent today! Write down your bright ideas. See how they look tomorrow, when everything is more solid and dependable from a planetary point of view.

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Diane C. Baldwin
Columbia, MD

4/26/04

ACROSS
1 Fricassee
5 Topmost location
9 Pitches to one side
14 Desert gully
15 Takeout side
16 Hilo hello
17 Ice skater's jump
18 Noble address
19 Cord fiber
20 Dickens kid
23 I.D. info
24 Palindromic before
25 Up-to-date
29 Only fair
31 Debate side
34 Farm measurements
35 Barnyard skyscraper
36 Capital of the Ukraine
37 Saint-Exupery hero
40 Special periods
41 Same-old routines
42 Playwright Chekhov
43 Mars hue
44 Knight's wife
45 After-market purchases
46 Boar's mate
47 Pressure meas.
48 Nursery rhyme fellow
57 Brilliance
58 Not for
59 Remnants
60 Oil-producing rock
61 Marquee name
62 Bawl
63 Skin cream
64 Driving expense
65 Rock from side to side

DOWN
1 Go after a gnat
2 Proceed to the runway
3 Tree of Knowledge site
4 Full of guile
5 Select for a duty
6 Regional weather
7 "I and My Village" painter Chagall
8 Washstand item
9 Batista's successor
10 Lewis Carroll heroine
11 Snack
12 Bangkok native
13 Ocean extract
21 Ankle bones
22 Fable master
25 Alma __
26 Earthy pigment
27 Cold feet
28 Squirmy catches
29 Like deltas
30 Corrida shouts
31 Patchy pony
32 Scout's mission
33 Bakery fixtures
35 Kind of poker
36 Good-hearted
38 Fish for mackerel
39 Diameter halves
44 Mill about
45 Eddying
46 Marshy lowland
47 Part of a pansy
48 Into the sunset
49 Canyon reply
50 Spirited style
51 Ultimate
52 Enthralled by
53 Current events
54 Had down pat
55 Creative flash
56 Lay eyes on

Saturday's Puzzle Solved

A	P	P	L	E	S	■	T	H	A	L	A	M	U	S
S	T	R	I	C	T	■	H	O	L	O	C	E	N	E
S	O	O	T	H	E	■	R	E	L	O	C	A	T	E
E	M	S	■	O	R	E	O	S	■	S	E	D	U	M
S	A	P	I	E	N	C	E	■	H	E	D	O	N	E
S	I	E	R	R	A	S	■	S	I	N	E	W	E	D
O	N	C	E	■	■	T	E	E	M	E	D	■	■	■
R	E	T	■	P	R	A	N	C	E	D	■	B	A	N
■	■	■	C	R	O	S	S	E	■	■	T	A	R	E
V	A	C	U	I	T	Y	■	D	E	S	A	L	T	S
A	V	E	R	S	E	■	P	E	R	I	O	D	I	C
M	I	D	A	S	■	M	A	R	N	E	■	P	S	I
P	A	R	T	I	S	A	N	■	E	S	T	A	T	E
E	T	I	O	L	A	T	E	■	S	T	A	T	E	N
D	E	C	R	Y	P	T	S	■	T	A	M	E	S	T

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4/26/04

MARY HIGGINS CLARK
THE SECOND TIME AROUND
JOHANNA LINDSEY
A MAN TO CALL MY OWN
KATHLEEN E. WOODIWISS
The Reluctant Suitor
TERRY BROOKS
HIGH DRUID OF SHANNARA
JARKA RUUS
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EDWARD de Bono, the best-selling author of "Lateral Thinking and Six Thinking Hats," is back with "A Beautiful Mind," a book that enhances one's personal appeal through creative thinking.

"High Druid of Shannara," the fantasy saga of bestseller Terry Brooks, begins its newest chapter with "Jarka Ruuns," the captivating first book in the brand-new series. Rocky Mountain News calls it a treat for adults wanting more fantasy than what Harry Potter was able to give.

In "Garfield the Movie" by H.S. Newcomb, nothing seems to go wrong for Garfield. But when his owner, Jon, takes in sweet-but-dimwitted pooch Odie, his world turns upside down. Now Garfield wants Odie out of his home and life!

"The Reluctant Suitor," the long-awaited novel by romantic historical fictionist Kathleen Woodiwiss, is about a man who left home because he had been betrothed since childhood. Upon his return, a rival threatens to steal the lady from him when he finally realizes he has feelings for her.

Johanna Lindsey's "A Man to Call My Own" is a love story about an heiress who discovers passion in the arms of a Texas cowboy.

Suspense lovers would be thrilled with "The Second Time Around," Mary Higgins Clark's gripping tale of deception.

Dr. Robert Atkins' "The Atkins Essentials" provides a two-week program to jumpstart the low-carb lifestyle.

The books are available at National Book Store.

New book explains God's will

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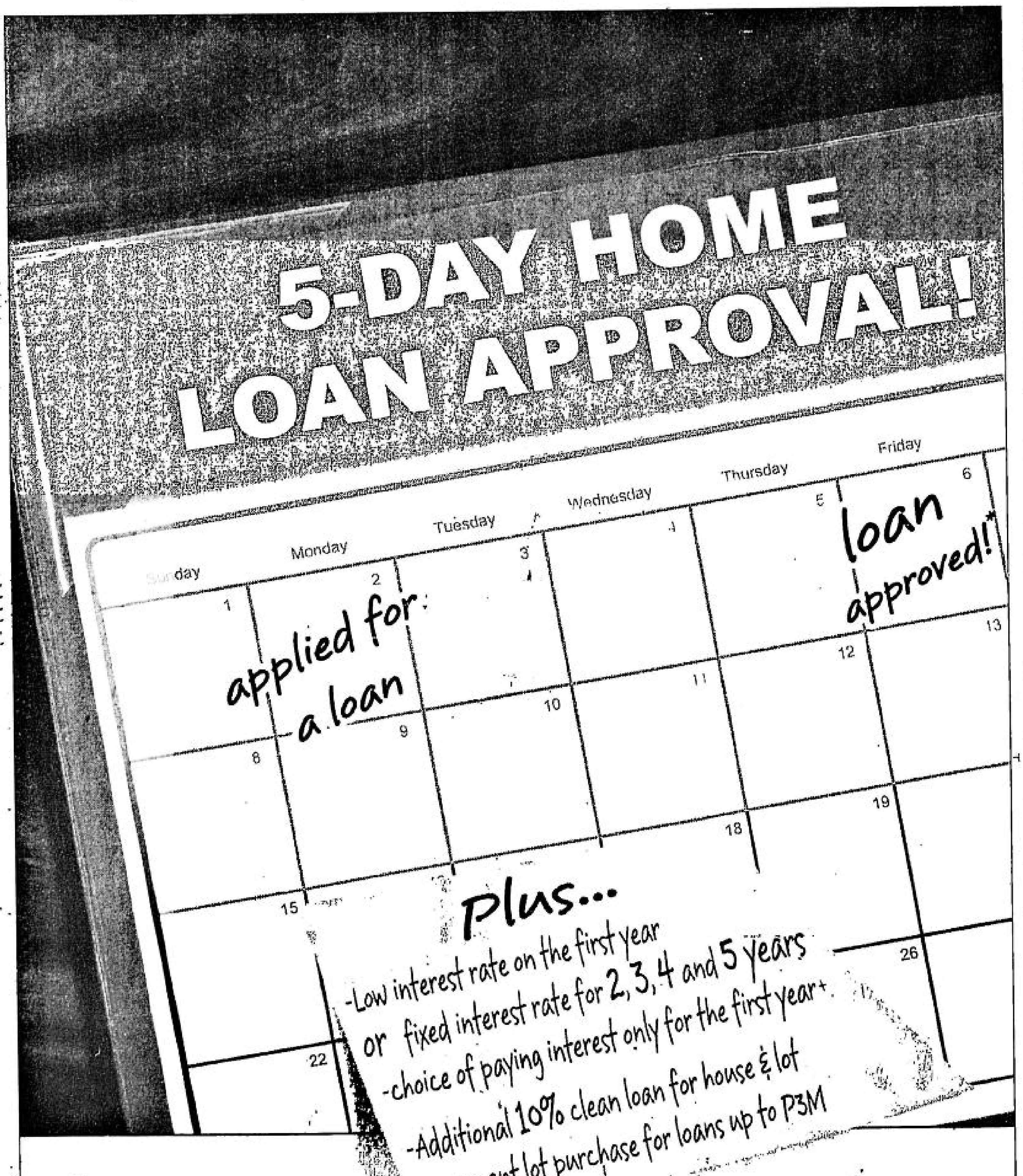
LIVING BY FAITH OR BY FATE
Douglas J. Elwood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Per DTI-NCR Permit no 0687, series of 2004

Exclusive clubs get the
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PLATINUM
treatment for Easter

All set to enjoy her new toy.

Kids hold their egg treasures and prizes.

Excitedly hunting for Easter eggs.

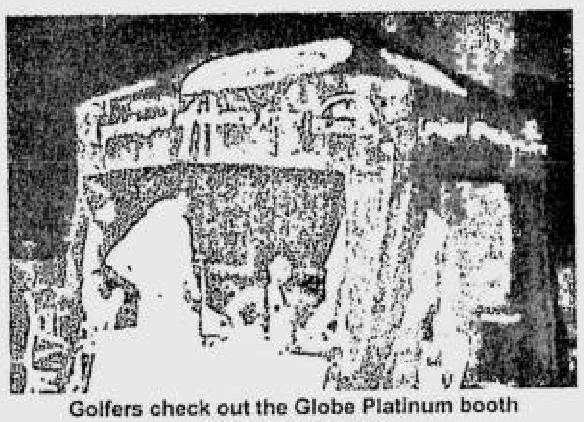
Eggs-a-bounty inside their Easter baskets

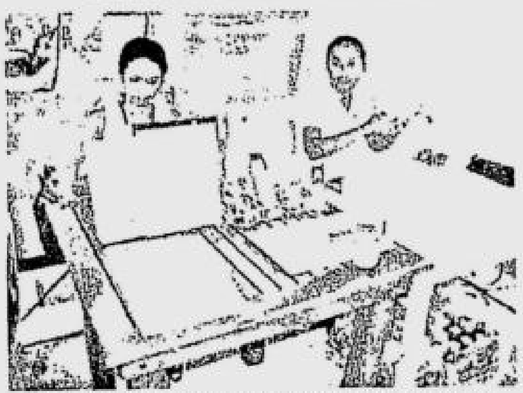
A perfect Sunday afternoon at Punta Fuego.

Globe representatives at the Globe Platinum booth.

Inquiries answered right away at Subic Yatch Club's Globe booth.

Sabor Latino got the Mardi Gras crowd in high spirits.


Golfers check out the Globe Platinum booth at Camp John Hay.


Ready to entertain those registering to win a Treo 270 at the Globe Platinum booth.

Belen Mandri receives her Nokia 6820.

CCA Phils. Arthur Lopez. Debbie Chan, Johnny Litton and Mega's Sari Yap

Amb Theo Arnold, James Thornton, Roselle Rebano and Beth Victoria

Hubby Greg, Cyndy, Mike Hodgkinson, Joe Rebano and Johnny Litton.

Johnny Chan, Vicky Castaneda, Johnny Litton, Cynthia Antonio, Cyndy Tan – Jarabata, Camille Agbayani, Ralph and Christine Fuchs

Lounging around, Globe Platinum style.

Beachcombers sign up at the Globe Platinum booth.

Posing for the camera while enjoying the weekend getaway

Roy Walters poses with Mardi Gras emcee

The Easter weekend was the perfect time for the highly regarded members of Globe Platinum to take a break and hie off to the country's most exclusive clubs for some Globe Platinum style R & R.

Wherever they went during Easter weekend, Globe Platinum was there. The Ayala Alabang Country Club, Punta Fuego, the Subic Bay Yacht Club, the Bellevue Hotel and Camp John Hay all became part of the rich and grandiose Platinum country, with different parties and privileges that have become the hallmark of the life of a Globe Platinum member.

The Ayala Alabang Country Club played host to Easter activities that delighted children and parents alike. Kids eagerly carried their Easter baskets as they raced to find colorful eggs hidden around the club. For finding the treasures, the children were given baskets upon baskets of toys, all courtesy of Globe Platinum and the ACC.

At the Subic Bay Yacht Club, Globe Platinum members got to flex their sea legs at the yacht race that weekend. To add to the exciting premium items given away, Globe Platinum also raffled off a Treo 270 unit and was brought home by lucky Natasha Sehwani. Also seen taking in the sea's tranquil sights were prominent personalities Winnie and Christian Monsod, and sisters Lara Melissa and Pinky de Leon.

Up north in Camp John Hay, Globe Platinum members took the time to swing and play on Baguio's cool and pristine greens. While its members were going for a perfect game, the Globe Platinum booth continuously accommodated people registering for the raffle of the Nokia 6800 which was eventually won by Dr. Manuel Quirino.

Entire families of Globe Platinum members who headed south for their Easter getaway were welcomed by the immaculate beaches of Punta Fuego, and premium items and prizes from the Globe Platinum booths set up at the resort. While relaxing at the peninsula's glistening waters, Rose Delgado completed her summer essentials with a new Treo 270 that she won in the Globe Platinum raffle.

Back in the Metro, Globe Platinum members got the feel of the festive Mardi Gras as they stepped inside the Bellevue Manila. To add sizzle to the summer celebration, premium handsets from Globe Handyphone were raffled off. Lady luck smiled on partygoers Belen Mandri and Roy Walters who each won a prized Nokia 6820 phone unit courtesy of Globe Platinum. Not long after, Sabor Latino's strumming had the elite crowd dancing the night away.

It sure looked like Globe Platinum members got the royal treatment from their choice club wherever they went last Easter break. It only goes to show how Globe Platinum knows and values their esteemed subscribers in ways no other club can.

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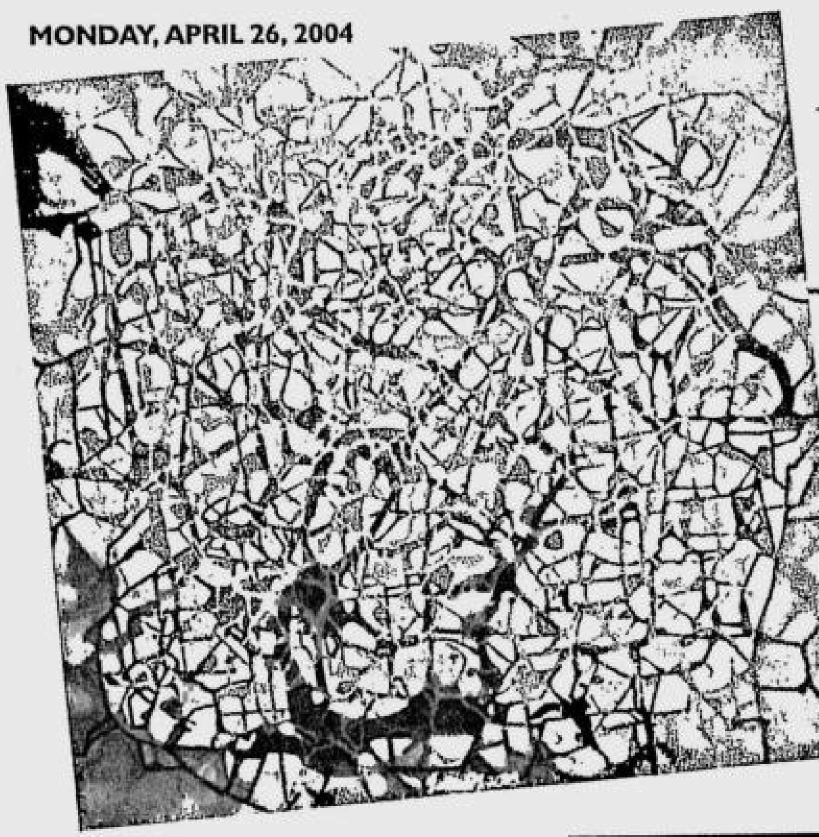
LIFESTYLE

Emma Navarro on her own



"LOOKING for a Way Out"

By Constantino C. Tejero

A WONDROUS display of color and rhythm is "Emmazed," the fourth solo exhibit of Emma Navarro, widow of National Artist J. Elizalde Navarro.

The 12 pieces in oil and acrylic on canvas burst like fireworks in The Big & Small Art Co. at the Artwalk, 4/L, Bldg. A, SM Megamall, Mandaluyong City.

The show's title is a coinage of the artist's name, the visual allusion to mazes, and that sense of wonderment. It is a milestone of sort for the artist, as this is her first abstract exhibit, and another step out of her famous husband's shadow. (She signs her artworks simply "Emma N.")

"For a long time, I was scared to do abstract because I might be influenced by his work," Navarro confides. "I hope I'm now out of his shadow. I know his work and I'm sure he had

EMMA/F3

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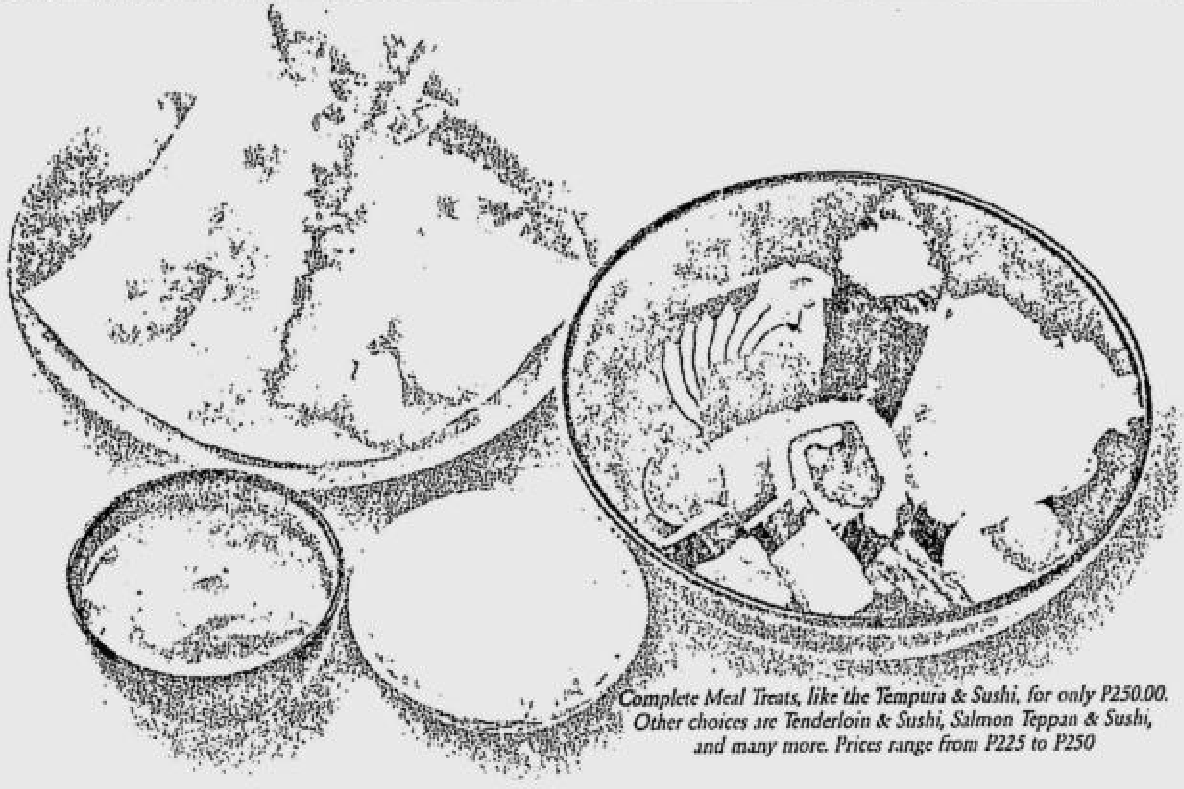

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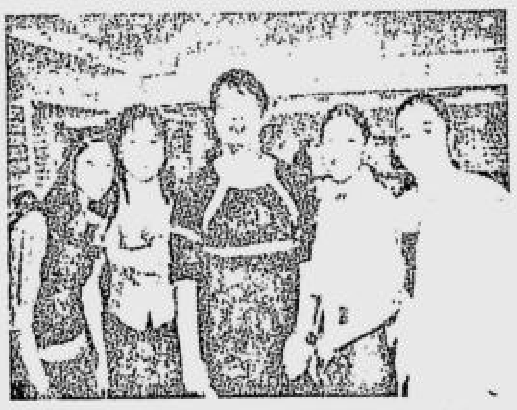
Movie stars Angelika Dela Cruz, Marvin Agustin and Dominic Ochoa as well as personalities from the government, business sector and media graced the Sake San blessing. Also in photo are Dwight and Pia Lago, daughter Riana, Veejay with son Veeno and Maridel Villavicencio

A new sun rises at SM MEGAMALL 4TH LEVEL with the opening of Sake San, where Japanese cuisine puts on a new face. Sake San is the brainchild of Veejay Villavicencio, scion of the Villavicencio clan of restaurateurs. The Villavicencios were responsible for transforming the Japanese restaurant scene in Manila through the Saisaki chain. With its well-lit dining area and see through kitchens, Filipinos were introduced to a clean, comfortable venue for affordable and authentic Japanese food. The Saisaki Japanese Buffet still stands as a breakthrough in the widespread acceptance of one of Asia's most popular cuisines here in the Philippines. Now it's the younger Villavicencios' turn to make their mark in the family business. While most Japanese restaurants in the metro are staffed by local chefs, the Sake San kitchen is under the direct supervision of Isao Takada, veteran master chef from Japan. Chef Takada has set out to impress a new generation of jaded diners with his cutting edge Japanese nouvelle cuisine, while less adventurous palates may take comfort in Sake San's extensive menu of popular all time Japanese favorites.

Sake San
Sushi Special P300.00

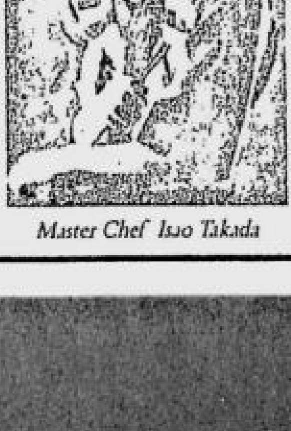
Sake San
Sashimi Special P255.00

Sake San appeals to both die-hard Japanese food-lovers and young people just out for a good time with its intimate and non-intimidating interiors done in dramatic red and black. Original art inspired by Kabuki and J-pop hangs on the resto's walls, giving it a quirky, fresh ambiance that sets it apart from other Asian themed restaurants. True to its name, this is one place where sake and the food fully satify. Very new, very classic, very Japanese, that's the Sake San dictum.



Vicky, Maridel, Veejay, Cara and Pia Villavicencio-Lago

While studying business in La Salle, Veejay often thought of putting his own restaurant. He envisioned the place as an alternative hangout where young urban professionals or burgeoning families can enjoy exciting and contemporary Japanese food without the prohibitive prices of upscale restaurants, but well above the quality found in fast-food outlets. With the support of wife Treena, sisters Pia, Cara, Mara, Vicky and brother Bokie, Veejay's vision was assured of a perfect realization. A successful restaurant is not just a family but a team effort as well, and Sake San's starting line-up included the best in the business, from the expert kitchen crew and the impeccably trained waitstaff to the brilliant marketing team. At the formal opening, the Villavicencio family forces were in full display, from the eldest daughter Pia Villavicencio Lago, along with her husband , former PBA cager Dwight and daughter Riana, the twins Mara and Cara, Bokie and Vicky. Stealing the show was Veejay's son, Veeno, who claimed his spot with the guests of honor during the ribbon cutting and blessing officiated by Fr. Giovanni G. Piva, a family friend. The opening celebration, being a major social event in the middle of the Lenten Season, turned out to be a temptation too good to abstain from. A grand time was had by all and the newest go-to-spot in the metropolis earned its place in the maps of gimmickeros and gourmands everywhere.



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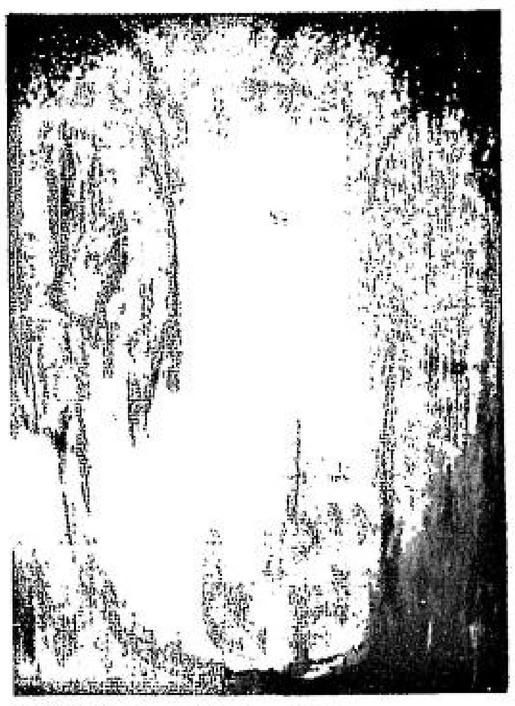
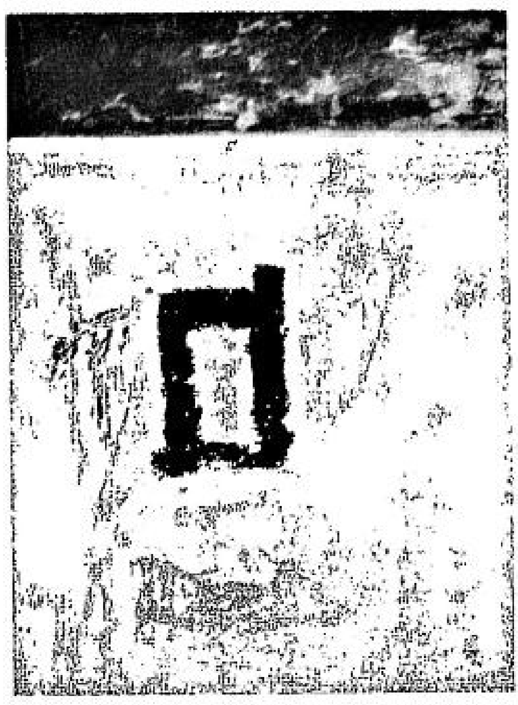
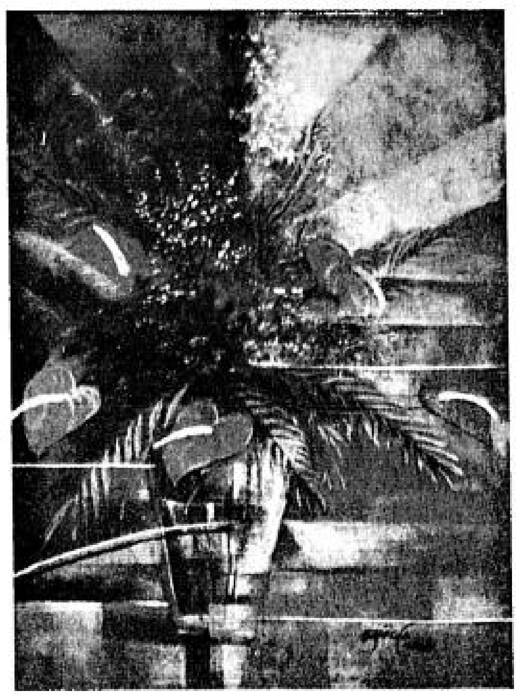
JO Austria, LindsLee, Jeps Belen and Art Bermido



"DAY Dreamer," by Jeps Belen



"EXPLOITED Simplicity," by Jo Austria



"STILL Life," by Noli Española

Art by the number

Hard-core abstractionists from UST mount a joint show

By Gino Dormiendo
Contributor

THE FOUR artists share an identical background.

Belonging to the University of Santo Tomas (UST) College of Fine Arts Class 2000, they adhere to the principles of Fibonacci (from the Latin phrase "*Filius Bonacci*" meaning "son of Bonacci"), a system that uses a numerical sequence widely used in mathematics, architecture, music and art.

The four hard-core abstractionists—Jo Austria, Jeps Belen, Art Bermido and LindsLee—are mounting "Fibonacci: A Mathematical Approach" at the SM Megamall Art Center, until April 27.

Primordial forms

The works of Jo Austria (Julio Jose Austria) are a veritable cosmology of primordial forms that signify the artist's perception of reality—strange-looking creatures and fragile objects hurled onto the vortex of a seemingly hostile universe.

In "Artist Dwarfed by His Own Creation," a large crescent moon looms over a string-like contraption, a solitary geometrical form in a sea of austere colors symbolizing reflection under a naked moon. This is how the artist conjures art's reductive power, simply paring it down to its essence.

AL Giroy of Sining Marikina working on the bust of José Rizal

A fervid colorist, Jeps (Jeffrey) Belen sees the world in a prism of colors, reveling in the sheer joy and ecstasy of paint dripping and flowing across the canvas. With smudges or spots of equivocal color, his works, as in the "Dawn" series, have a celebratory mood.

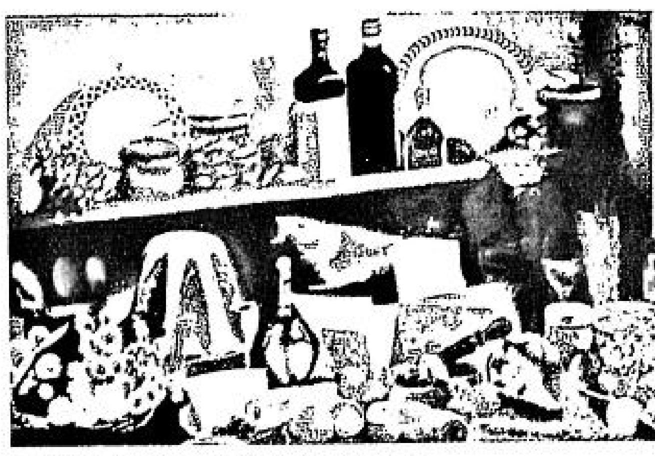
The viewer is led to a whole landscape, dynamic and variegated at close range. Accidents of coloristic recession and advancement are emotions and ideas for the beholder's initiation. The works are modern meditations on abstraction.

Evolving and transmuting

Art (Artemio) Bermido's works have gone through a cycle of evolutions and transmutations, moving from a pursuit of hedonistic pleasures to rigid geometrical irregularities. The leap to spare imagery is most evident in the recent works, all titled "Stimuli."

The artist opts for muted colors and a more Zen-like field, rich with textural effects and gestural apposite movements. Bermido has finally struck the right introspective note.

LindsLee (Lindsey James Lee) has constantly refined his sense of abstraction with a pervasive vocabulary and a pursuit of new materials and techniques. In the new works, he no longer confines himself to his trademark gestural and expressionist touches. Images have undergone a rigorous process of distillation; his brushstrokes on metal sheets, as in "Delimitation 2," acquiring a more lambent quality than in the past, with fine drippings on the edges taking a more deliberate course.



"HOLIDAY Dining," by Cirilo Panerio

Those in mixed media on canvas, however, reveal his usual jagged lines, resembling calligraphic outbursts and discharges in the electromagnetic field. In the depth of the sensorial fulfillment the images provide, the artist has achieved control over abstract idiom.

All four artists retained their identity in style and substance, developing a new aesthetics in their effort to expand the boundaries of abstraction. They have extracted the best qualities of modern abstraction by simply adhering to age-old principles of art-making.

Resurrected

Meanwhile, artists belonging to Sining Marikina, most of them residents of the city, have finally mounted a group show after a long period of hiatus. Founded some years ago, the group has resurrected itself with Ronnie Eustaquio, a UST College of Fine Arts alumnus, at the helm, and some 20-odd members.

Sining Marikina's comeback show at the Saturday Group Gallery at the Ali Mall (until May 5) displays a wide variety of talents mostly engaged in the representational mode.

Several members have already made a name for themselves, including painter-sculptor Al Giroy, Noli Española, Ernesto Flores, Cirilo Panerio and Lydia Velasco, the moving spirit behind the revival.

Giroy has two sculptures, including a bust of national hero Dr. Jose Rizal with a pensive mien. Española is an excellent watercolorist, while Panerio is a hyperrealist as shown in "Holiday Dining," with its rich array of kitchen paraphernalia and fruits used in wine-making.

Velasco, the more senior, is famous for her rendering of the woman in all her seductive Gaugainesque-glory, as in "Salamisim," amid a fiery backdrop of earth and sky.

Other participating artist-members are Rene Belison, Monn Caneza, Rene Clemente, Jun Concepcion, Jose Hombrebueno, Jose Ibay, Ren Maglalang, Ernie Patricio, Andy Pernia, Roland Rosacay, Elmer Torio, Andy "Abu" Urag and Roquesio Morales.

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Emma Navarro on her own

From page F1

not done this before."

What she has done is, she would prime her canvas with acrylic, drip the oil paint, move the canvas around, and stop only when she feels the layering and color combinations are enough. She finishes it up with more controlled brushwork.

"As an artist, you always know when it's enough," she says. "I won't stop till I'm happy."

Stunning hues and rhythms

The result is a sunburst of hues and rhythms of such intensity they daze the eyes. Here a central circle or square of lightening color frames overlapping cobwebs of vivid red, yellow, green, blue, brown, olive-green, avocado-green, pink, orange, violet, maroon, white, black, purple.

"It's like a weaving of colors, one upon another," says the artist. "It reminds me of mazes. The lines are playfully created—to amaze myself. It's like play to me, but serious work goes into the canvas—in the choice and combination of colors, patterns, movement."

In some aspects, these pieces are related to Op Art. But foremost, they belong to Abstract Expressionism. In fact, they fulfill its aim to allow "movement without restraint, color without outline, emotion without reality."

Navarro says she refuses to look at art books because, once she sees the works of other artists, she gets influenced. Studying in the University of Santo Tomas College of Fine Arts, she was into advertising.

"I have been told that these are merely drippings, that it has been done before," she says.

Yes, it has been done before, specifically by Pollock on a much larger scale. But they most closely resemble the works of Sam Francis, such as "Around the Blues," in which splotches of paint have been "dripped, flicked, splattered onto the canvas with controlled abandon."

Reference to the real world

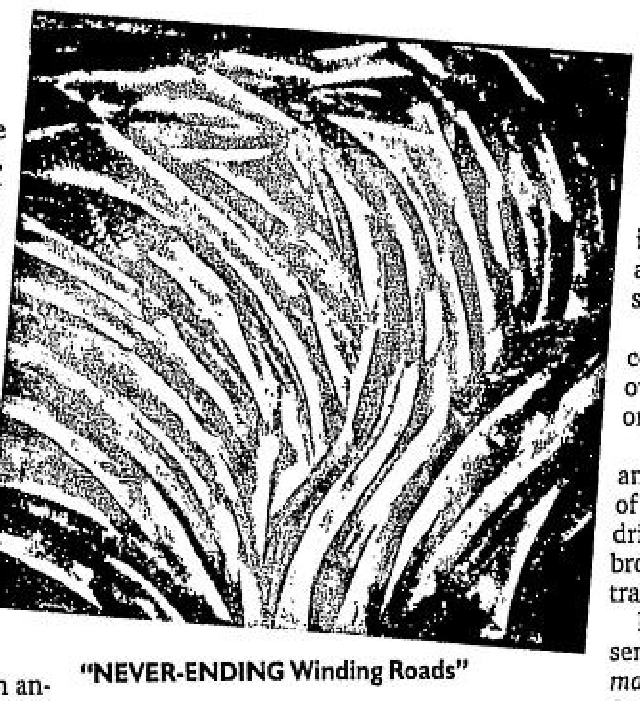
Most of their titles seem to be concocted by free association: "Vacant Planets," "Eternity's Invention," "Looking for a Way Out," "Underwater Mysteries," "Don't Run in the Wrong Direction," "The Past Is Not the Future," "Stairways to Nowhere," "Rushing to Your Side."

One is even misleading. In "Never-Ending Winding Roads," what we see are not any real roads but what appears to be a swaying bamboo grove.

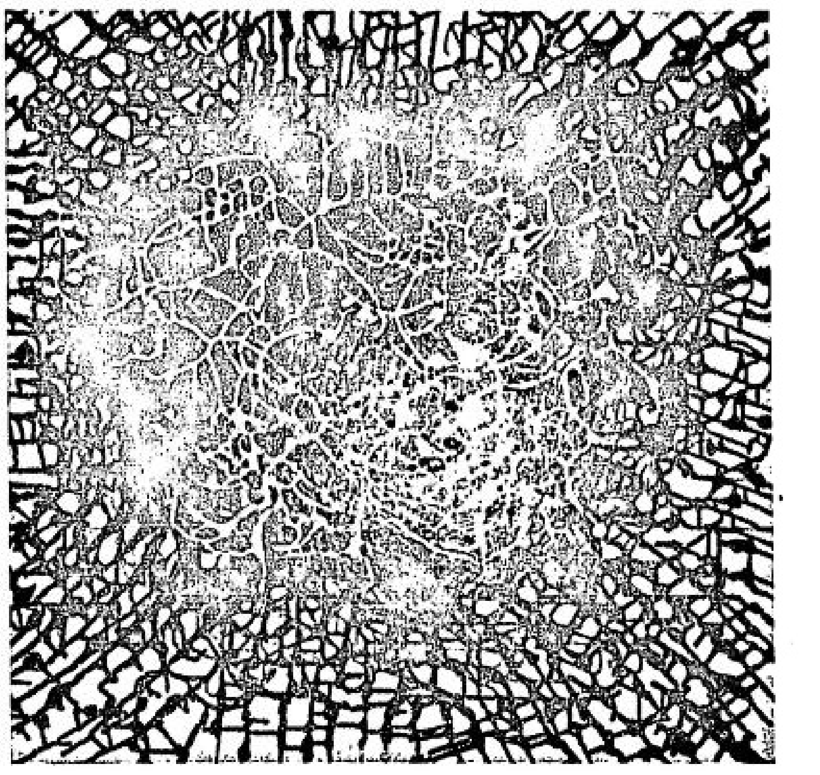
This one is distinct, as it doesn't have the cobwebby motif of the other pieces. With its overlapping strips of fuchsia, green, violet, orange and blue, it resembles a Pucci print.

The only image we can make out that has any direct reference to the real world is that of "Trek to Snowy Mountain." With its gray drippings on a background of blue and brown, it resembles some winter scenes in traditional Japanese scroll paintings.

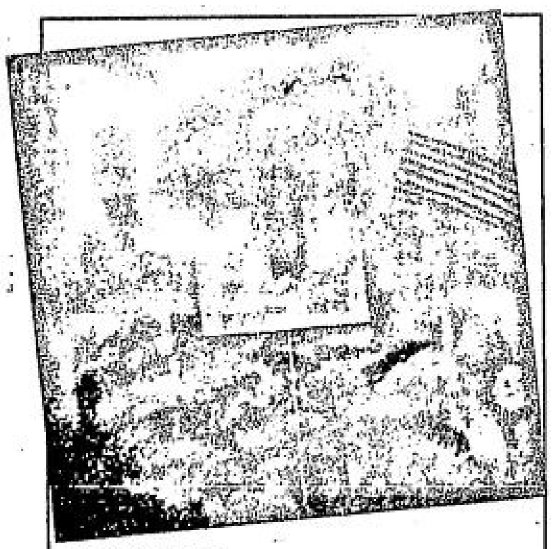
For now Navarro is engrossed in abstract or semi-abstract work. "*Matagal pa bago ako bumalik sa* figurative. *Nakakapagod din 'yun.* Just right now I'm enjoying myself."



"NEVER-ENDING Winding Roads"



"CAUGHT in the Web"



"UNTITLED"

More mature Carlo Magno in 2 shows

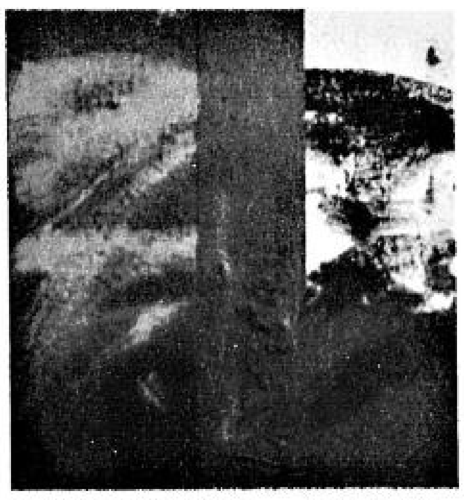
WITH a strong foundation in realism, Carlo Magno holds a major exhibit of abstracts, "On Higher Ground," starting tomorrow, April 27, at 7 p.m. in Galerie Joaquin (371 P. Guevarra St. and Montessori Lane, Addition Hills, San Juan; tel. 7239253, - 9418).

The works are also exhibited at the Diretso Gallery (International Design Center on N. Garcia St. [formerly Reposo], Makati) starting May 7.

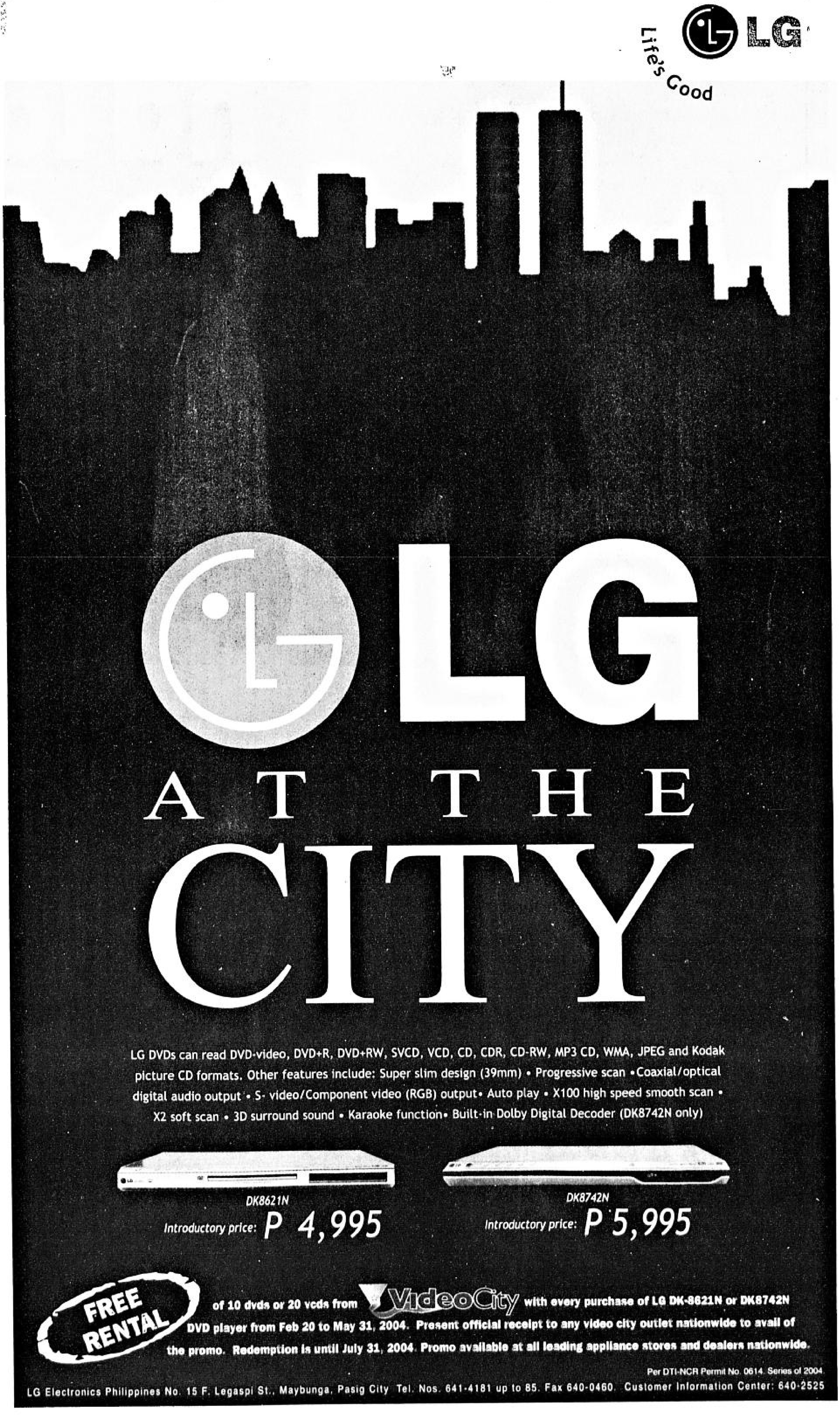
The show, says the artist, reaffirms his belief in free expression while reflecting his efforts to reach a more mature stage. "This time, I believe I can see clearly where it is I want my art to go."

"The influences are there," Magno adds. "But this is really just the start. It is our jumping board. What we have done is to retain the best or what appeals to the artist and then add to it."

There is a flow and what the artist is doing is enjoying being part of the flow which is the renewed popularity of abstract art.



"FIRE and Ice"



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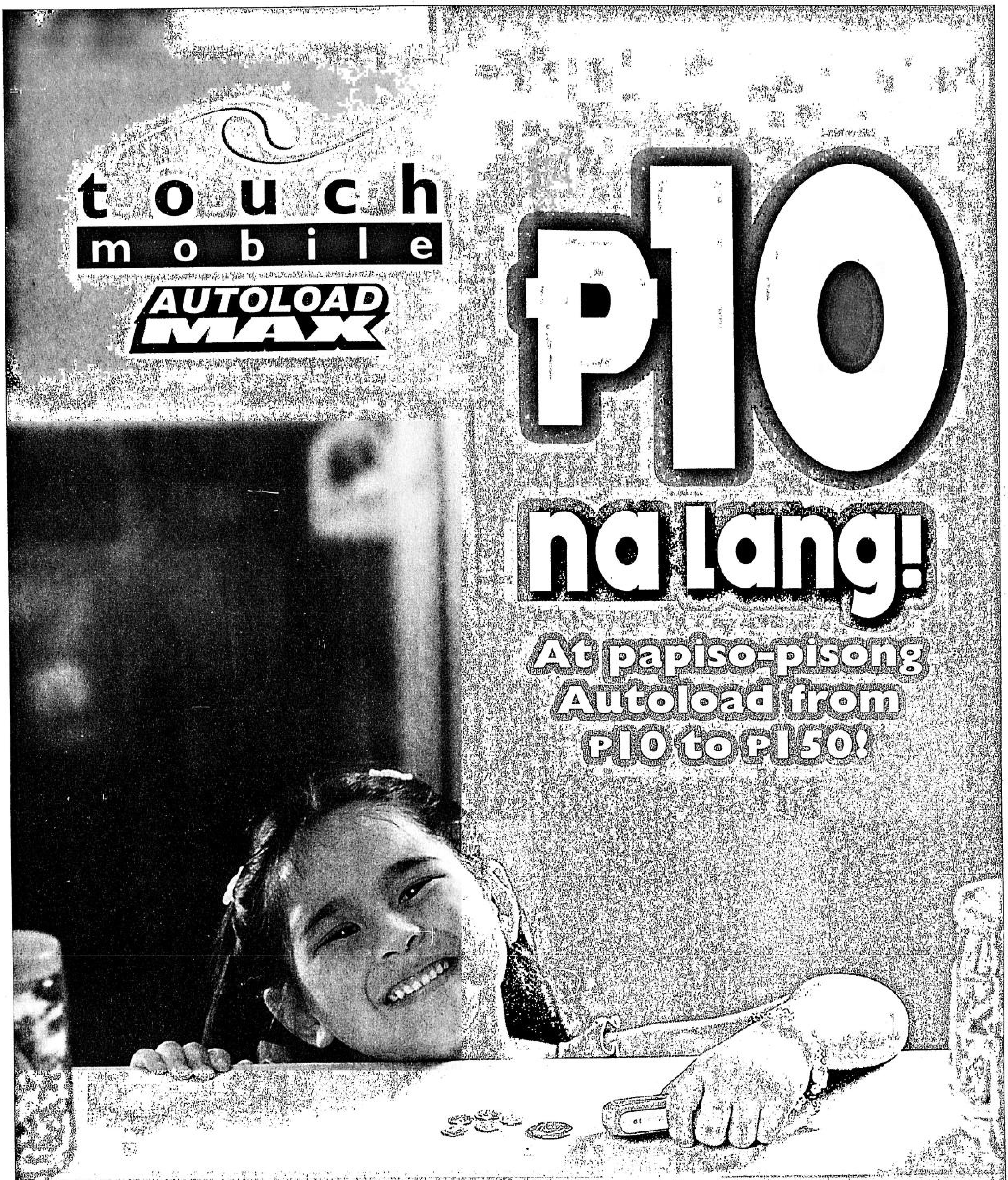
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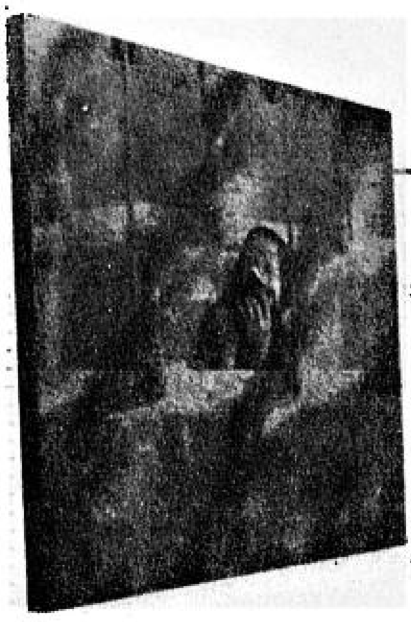

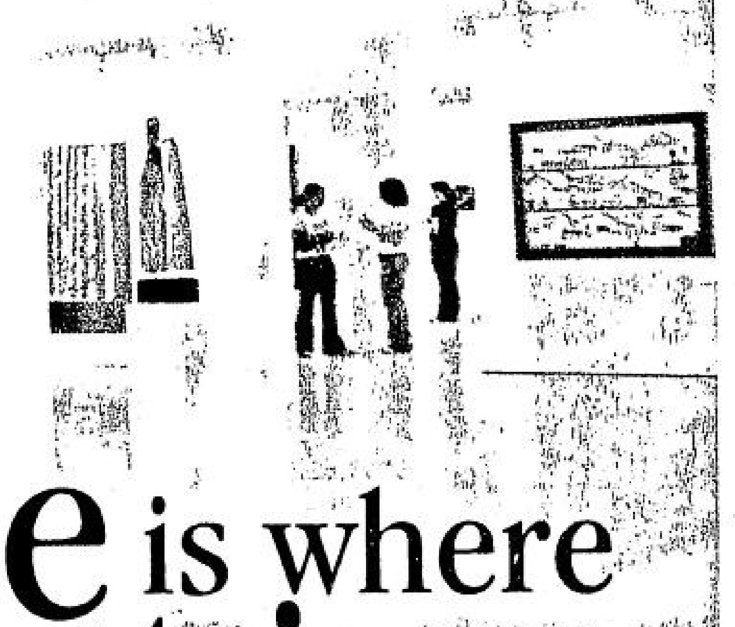

Home is where the art is

NEW shows built around the Ateneo Art Gallery's permanent collection and recent acquisitions have built new audiences for the museum. In the foreground is a work by Alfred Esquillo.

By Lito B. Zulueta
Photos by Ernie Sarmiento

THE ATENEO Art Gallery is staking again its claim as the country's foremost house of modern Philippine art. Not that it has lost much ground lately. It is just that with the growing "mall-ification" of contemporary art, or the calculated forays of galleries into the mall lifestyle, people tend to ignore more and more the contributions of Ateneo and other galleries and museums of its kind in collecting modern art back in the time when it was not *de rigueur.*

The contributions of Ateneo to Philippine art are unassailable. From the original sizeable donation of his collection by Fernando Zobel, the gallery has gone from strength to strength. Through the vision and constancy of its original curator, poet, teacher and art critic Emmanuel Torres, the gallery has built up a sizeable collection of modern and contemporary art through the years. Although it has the Old Masters (Hidalgo, Fabian de la Rosa and Amorsolo), more or less, it is Ateneo's collection of modern masters in their key transitory phase when they were achieving their unique voices that distinguishes the gallery.

Name it and Ateneo has it: Vicente Manansala and his seminal "Jeepneys"; H.R. Ocampo and his colorful but restrained abstracts; Arturo Luz and his minimalist geometries; the much neglected Jose Pardo, one of the original 13 moderns; Anita Magsaysay-Ho

HOME/ G2

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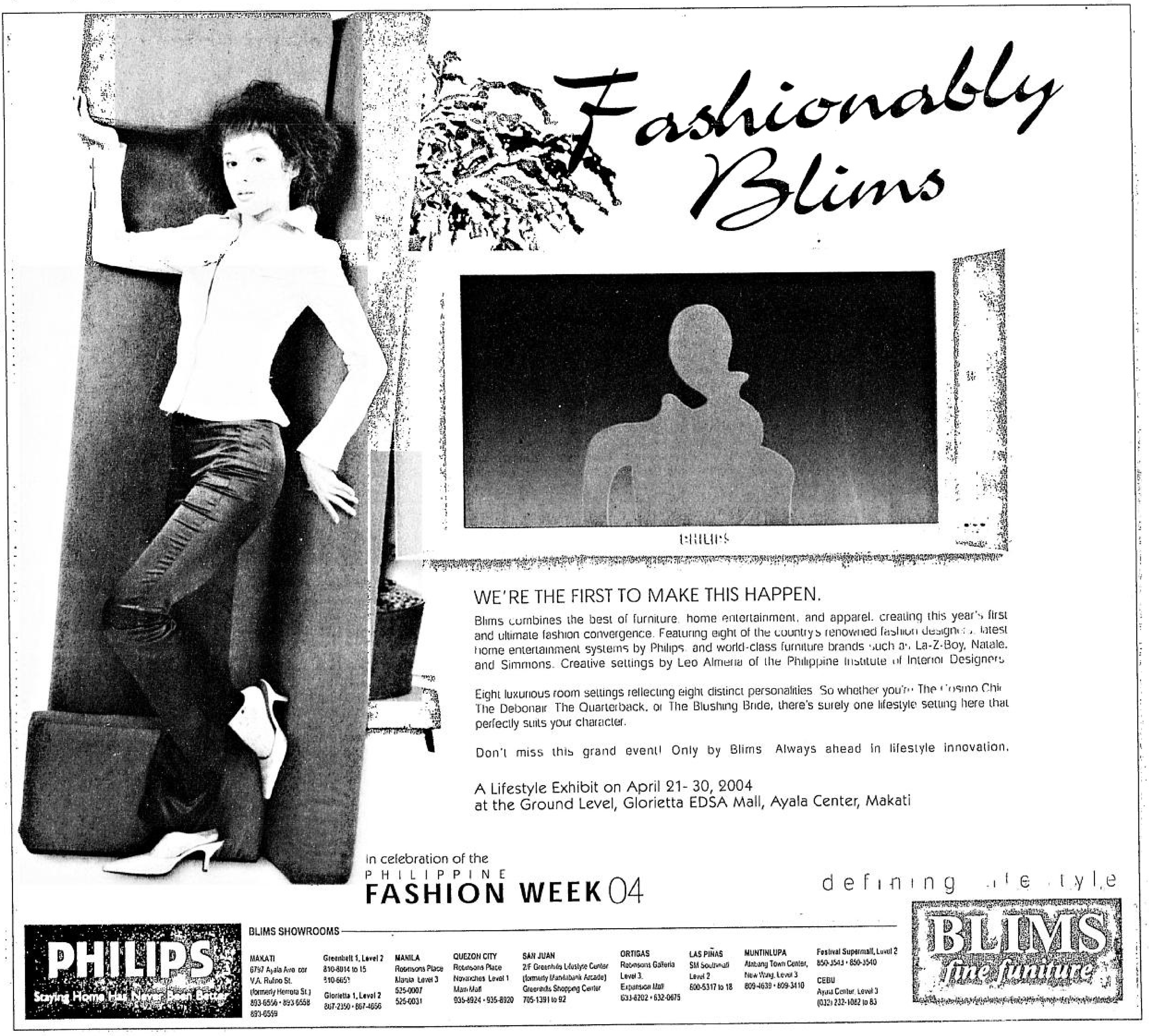
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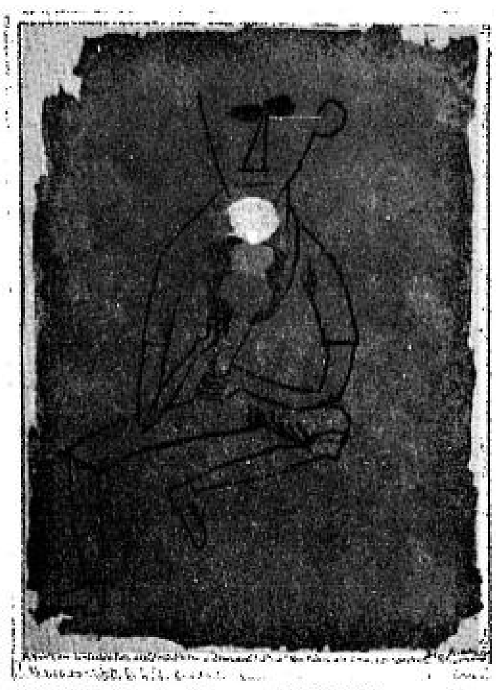

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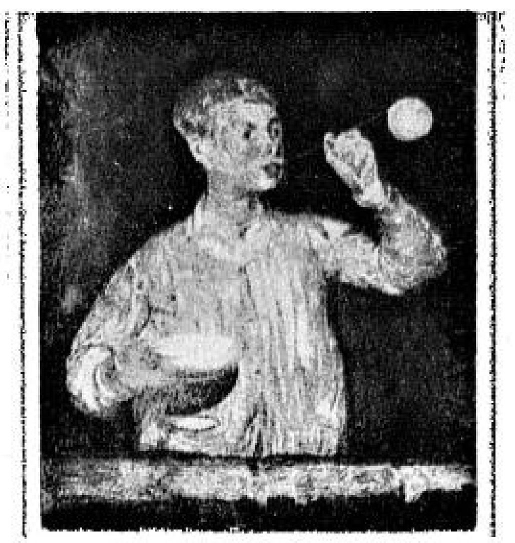

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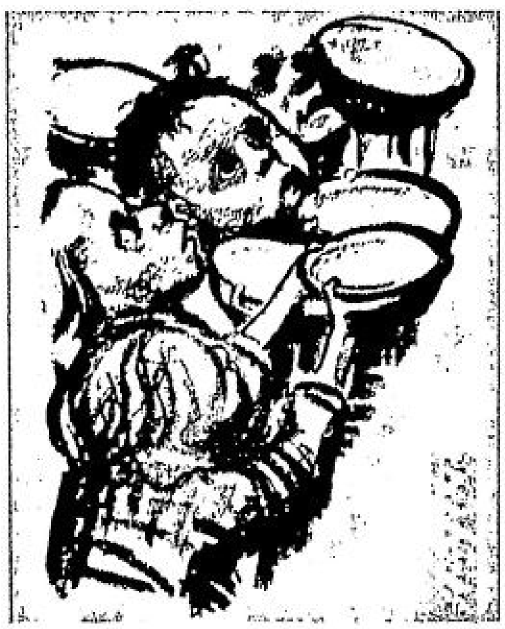

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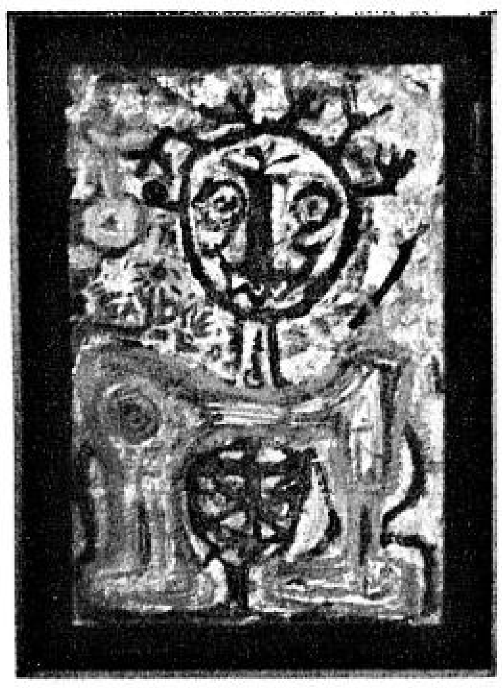

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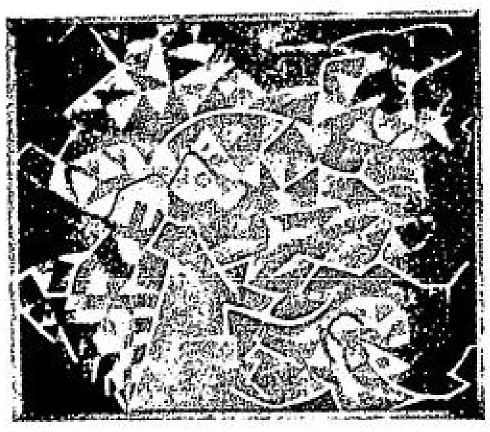

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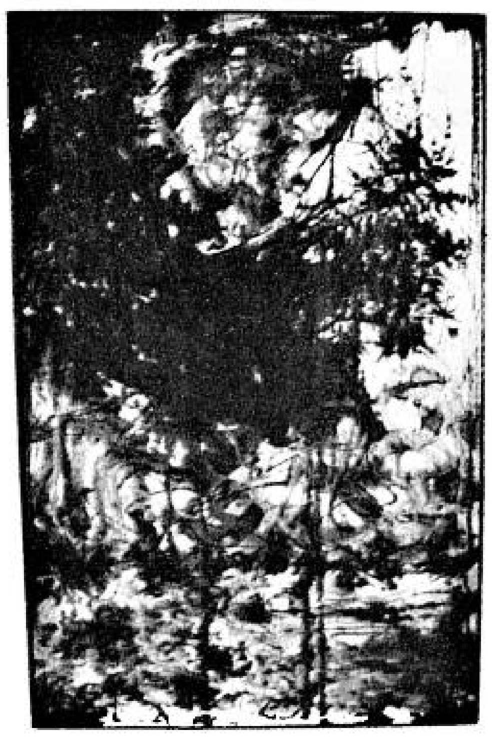

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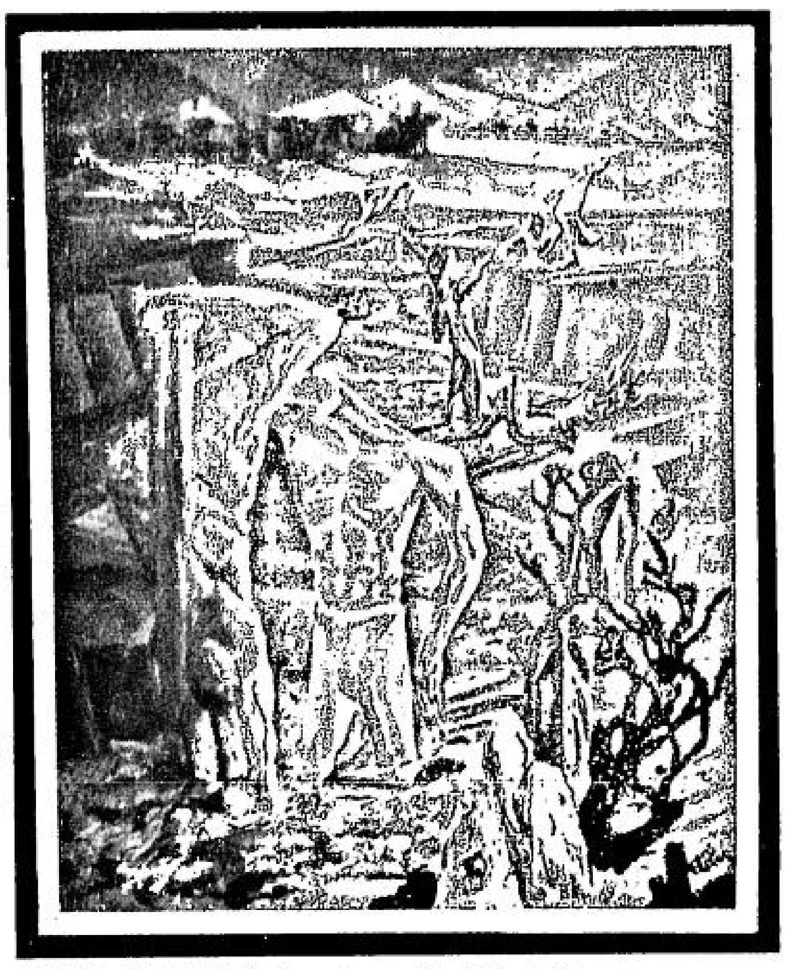
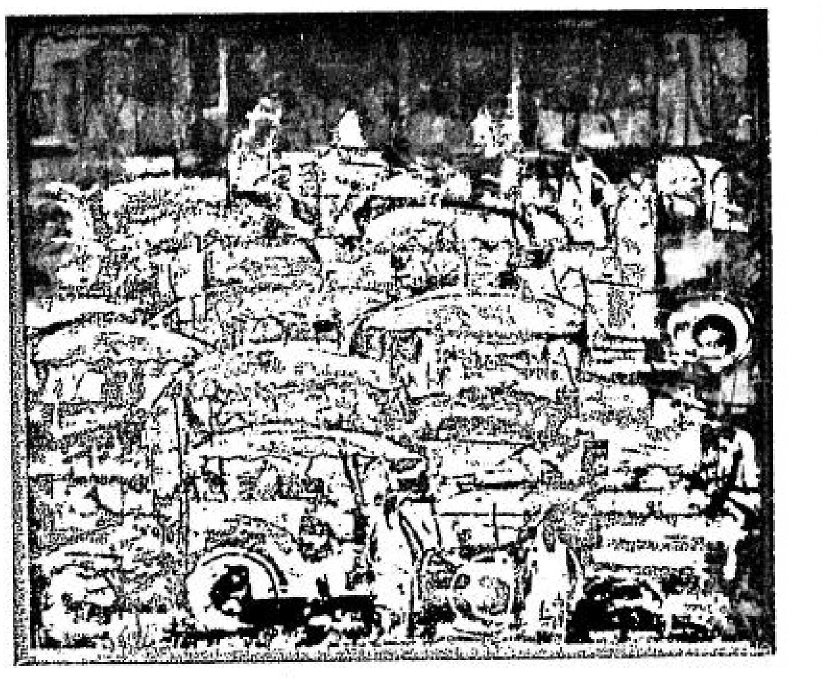


"RIVER of Life," 1954, oil on plywood, by Galo B. Ocampo



"JEEPNEYS," 1951, enamel on Masonite board, by Vicente Manansala

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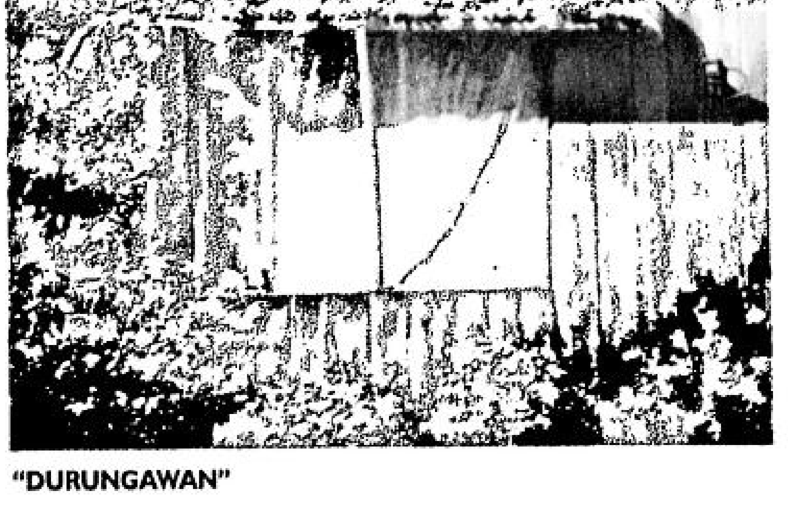
Mesina's windows at Renaissance, Aviado's drawings at Duemila

VISUAL ARTS



"DURUNGAWAN"

POL Mesina Jr.'s "Durungawan" will be showcased until May 2 at Renaissance Gallery, 4/L, SM Megamall A. The exhibit features different types of windows with scenery enlivened with flowers.

GALLERIA Duemila is exhibiting Virgilio Aviado's "Drawings" today until May 2 at 4/L, The Artwalk, Megamall A. The exhibit showcases Aviado's compositions on charcoal and pen, and ink on paper catalogues or archives of disparate objects.

RICCO-RENZO Galleries presents Danny Sillada's "Dreamweaver," which opens at 6 p.m. tomorrow at G/L, IDC Manila, 210 N. Garcia St., Bel-Air II, Makati.

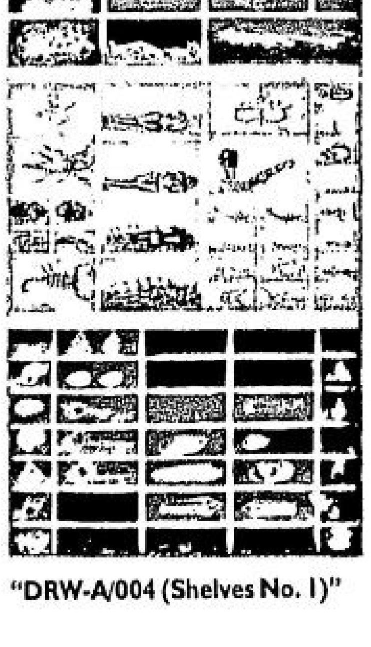
BIEN Benitez's abstract paintings are on display at 2/L, Firma Manila, 616 J. Nakpil St., Malate, Manila.

THE GSIS Museum of Fine Arts (GSIS Financial Center, Pasay City) features the works of visual arts graduates of the Philippine High School for the Arts: Fenella Ambrosio, Rudolf Barredo, Paul Batario, Lara Ferrer, Monica Obligacion, Alvin Sabornido, Carlo Tolentino and Ryan Villamael. "Ingress/Egress," runs until May 1.

ARTFARM animation studio is accepting students for a summer animation workshop. Interested participants may call 7467689 or 0917-9145065. Visit U-907 Atlanta Center, Annapolis, Greenhills.

E.R. Tagle holds summer art workshops for children and adults until May 27, 3 to 5 p.m. at Christ the King Parish, Greenmeadows Ave., QC; until May 28, Patio Manila Restaurant, lower G/F, Ramon Magsaysay Center, Roxas Blvd.; until May 29, coffee shop of Herald Suites, Chino Roces Ave., Makati; until June 5, 10 a.m.-12 nn, Enterprise Plaza, 1429 Pablo Ocampo St., Barangay San Antonio; until June 1, 9 to 11 a.m., Celestial Café Restaurant, G/L, Makati Cinema Square; and until May 31, 5:30 to 7:30 p.m., Food and Art Galerie, 12/L, G.T. Tower, cor. H.V. de la Costa and Ayala Ave., Makati. Call 8996358 or 0927-5522288.

AN AFFAIR with the Masters features Elmer Borlongan, Leslie de Chavez and Ferdie Doctolero on May 1 for a session on making pastel still-life drawings. It will be held at 3:30 to 6 p.m. at Greenbelt 3 Fountain Area, Greenbelt 4 Park and Ayala Museum Plaza, cor. of Makati Avenue and De la Rosa Street. Call 8121191 local 112.



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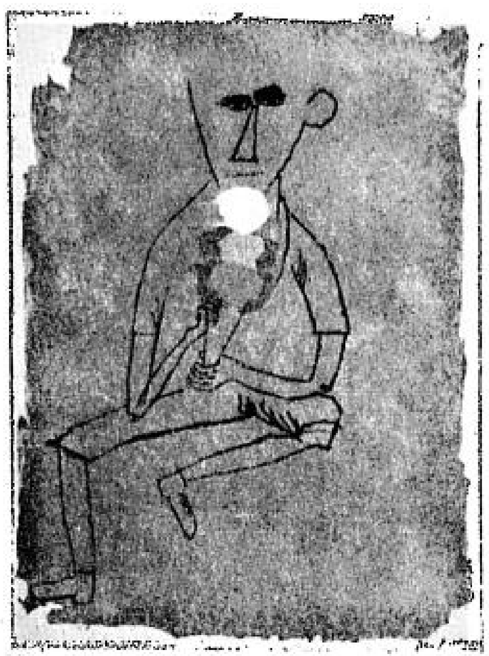

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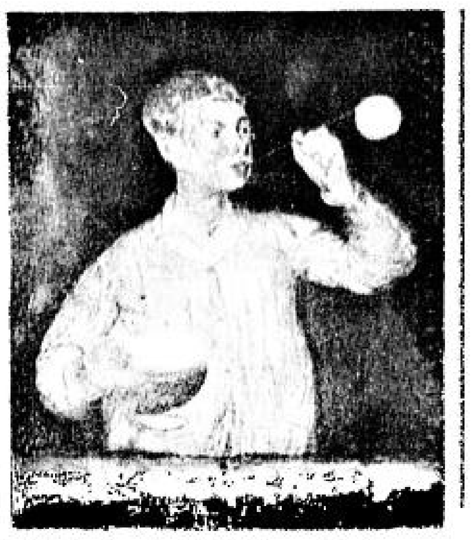

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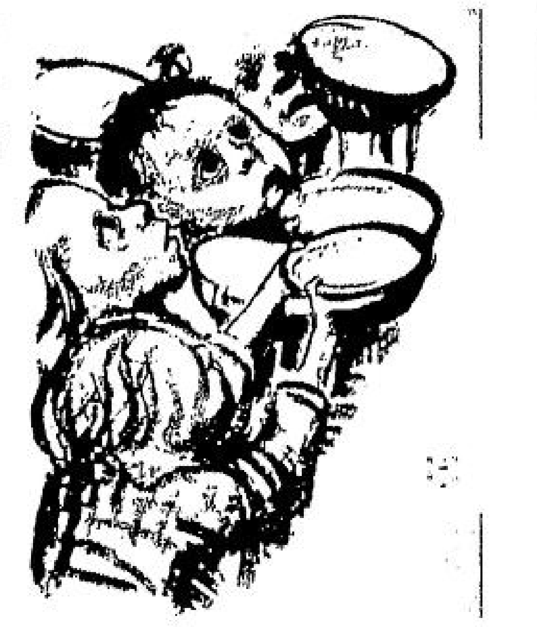

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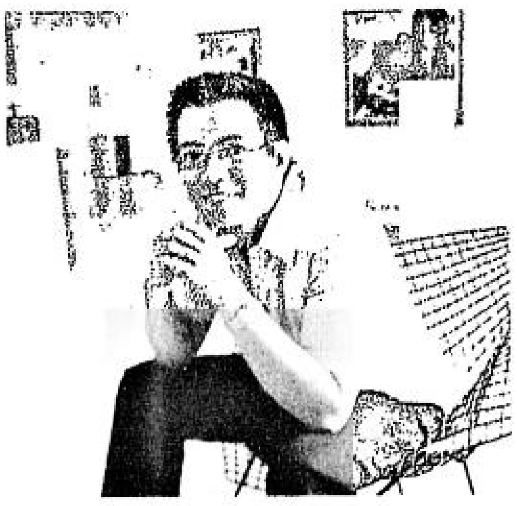

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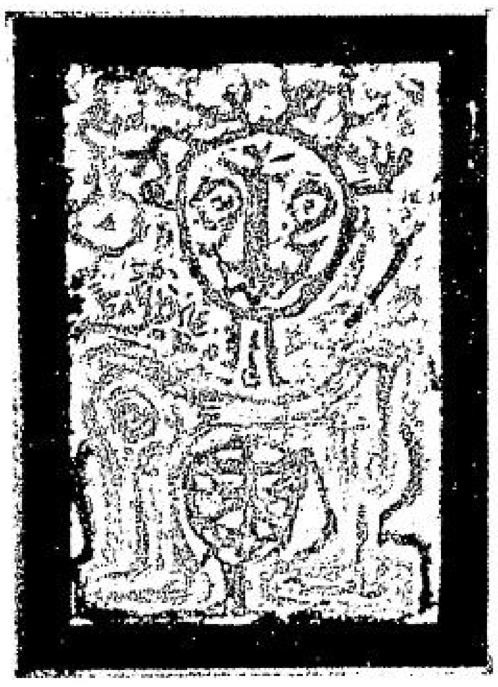

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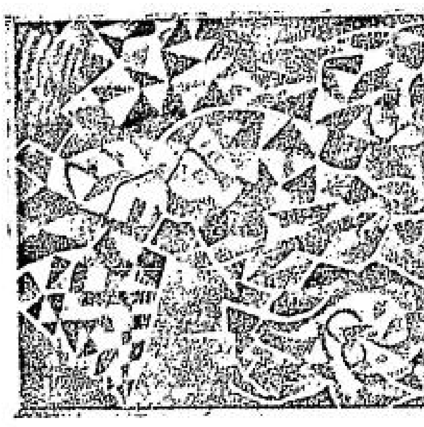

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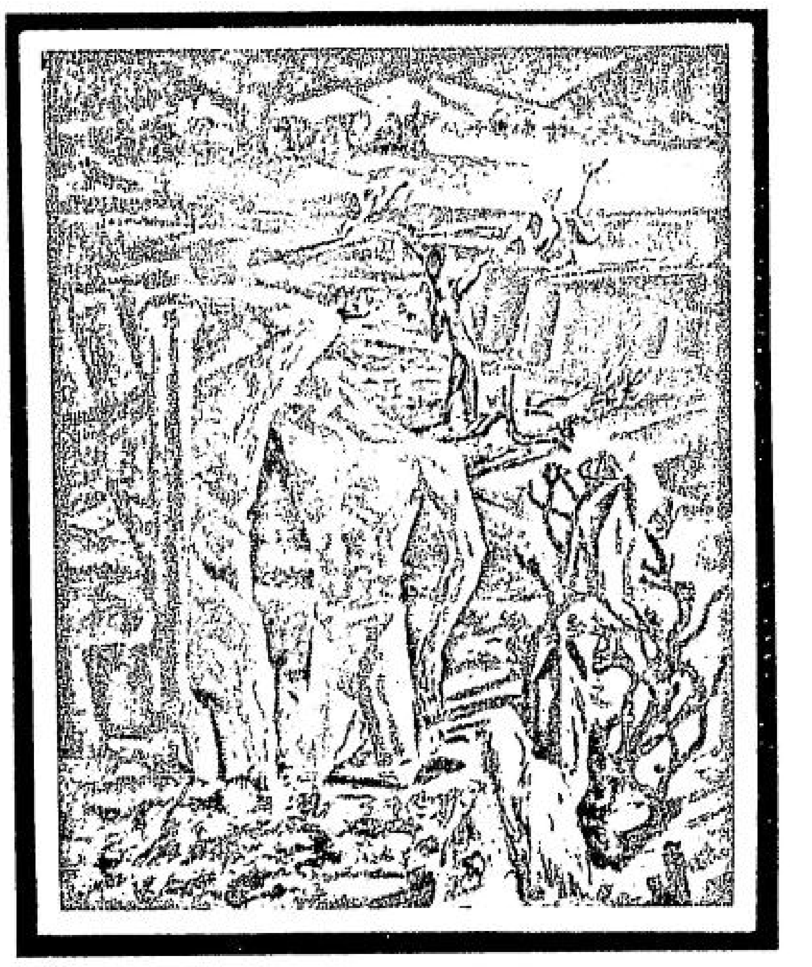

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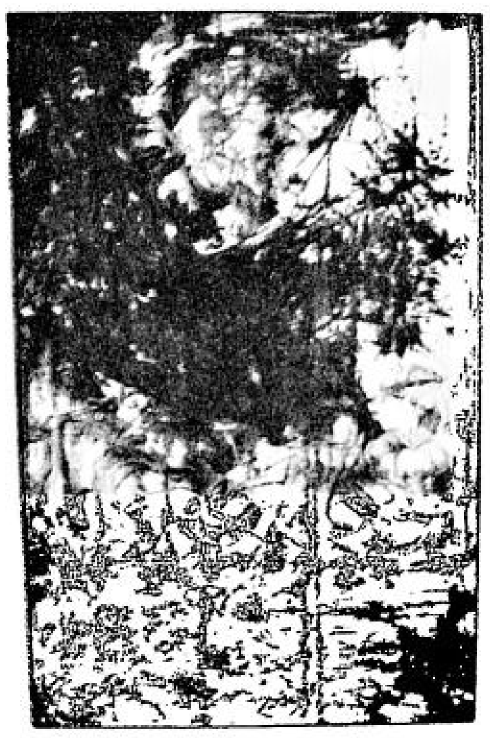
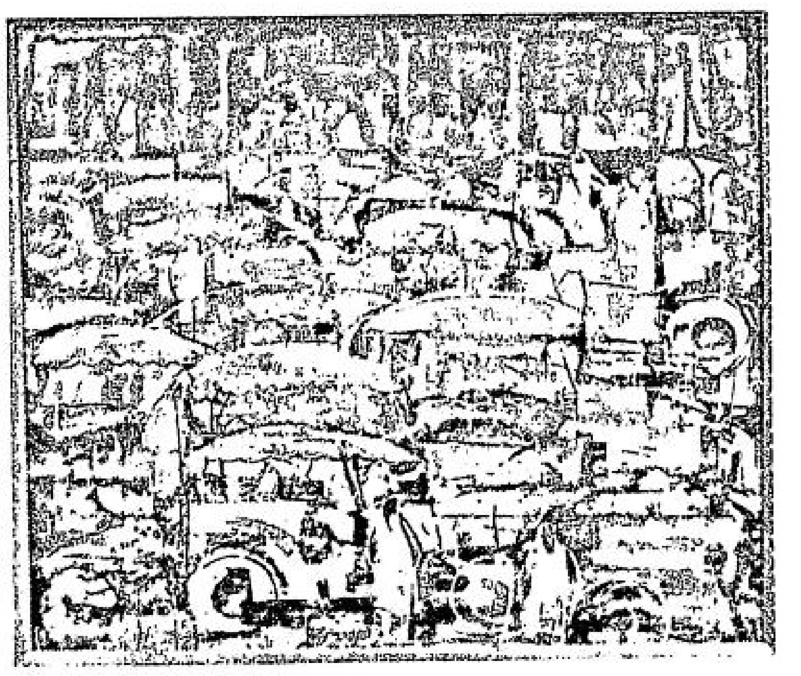


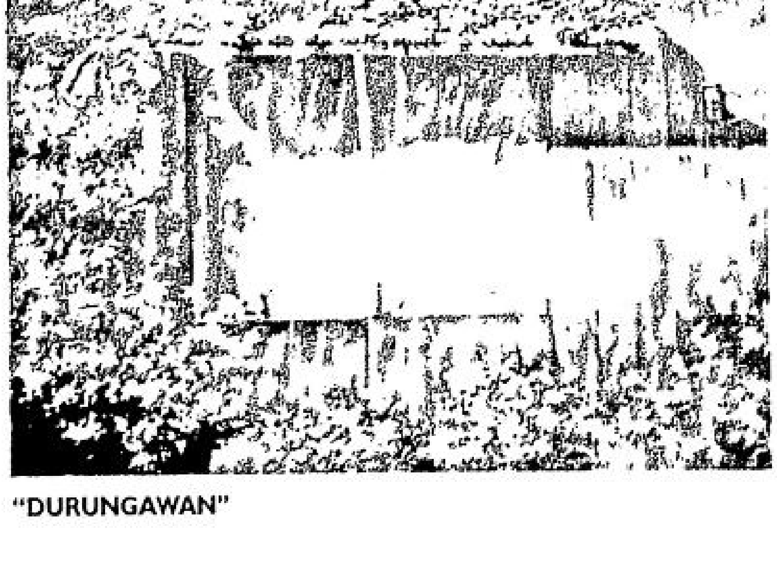
"CLOUDS of Conscience," 1956, oil on Masonite, by Alfonso Ossorio



"JEEPNEYS," 1951, enamel on Masonite board, by Vicente Manansala

Mesina's windows at Renaissance, Aviado's drawings at Duemila

VISUAL ARTS



"DURUNGAWAN"

POL Mesina Jr.'s "Durungawan" will be showcased until May 2 at Renaissance Gallery, 4/L, SM Megamall A. The exhibit features different types of windows with scenery enlivened with flowers

GALLERIA Duemila is exhibiting Virgilio Aviado's "Drawings" today until May 2 at 4/L, The Artwalk, Megamall A. The exhibit showcases Aviado's compositions on charcoal and pen, and ink on paper catalogues or archives of disparate objects.

RICCO-RENZO Galleries presents Danny Sillada's "Dreamweaver," which opens at 6 p.m. tomorrow at G/L, IDC Manila, 210 N. Garcia St., Bel-Air II, Makati

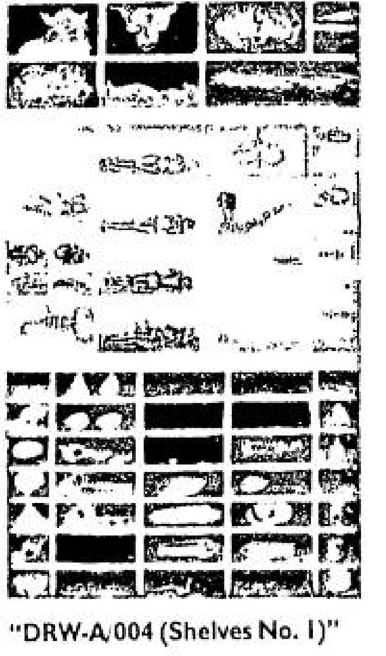
BIEN Benitez's abstract paintings are on display at 2/L, Firma Manila, 616 J. Nakpil St., Malate, Manila.

THE GSIS Museum of Fine Arts (GSIS Financial Center, Pasay City) features the works of visual arts graduates of the Philippine High School for the Arts: Fenella Ambrosio, Rudolf Barredo, Paul Batario, Lara Ferrer, Monica Obligacion, Alvin Sabornido, Carlo Tolentino and Ryan Villamael. "Ingress/Egress," runs until May 1.

ARTFARM animation studio is accepting students for a summer animation workshop. Interested participants may call 7467689 or 0917-9145065. Visit U-907 Atlanta Center, Annapolis, Greenhills.

E.R. Tagle holds summer art workshops for children and adults until May 27, 3 to 5 p.m. at Christ the King Parish, Greenmeadows Ave., QC; until May 28, Patio Manila Restaurant, lower G/F, Ramon Magsaysay Center, Roxas Blvd.; until May 29, coffee shop of Herald Suites, Chino Roces Ave., Makati; until June 5, 10 a.m.-12 nn, Enterprise Plaza, 1429 Pablo Ocampo St., Barangay San Antonio; until June 1, 9 to 11 a.m., Celestial Café Restaurant, G/L, Makati Cinema Square; and until May 31, 5:30 to 7:30 p.m., Food and Art Galerie, 12/L, G.T Tower, cor. H.V. de la Costa and Ayala Ave., Makati. Call 8996358 or 0927-5522288.

AN AFFAIR with the Masters features Elmer Borlongan, Leslie de Chavez and Ferdie Doctolero on May 1 for a session on making pastel still-life drawings. It will be held at 3:30 to 6 p.m. at Greenbelt 3 Fountain Area, Greenbelt 4 Park and Ayala Museum Plaza, cor. of Makati Avenue and De la Rosa Street. Call 8121191 local 112



"DRW-A/004 (Shelves No. 1)"

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Trials of the terno

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Bea Zobel Jr.

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"Well then," my brother answered, "present us with something more convincing."

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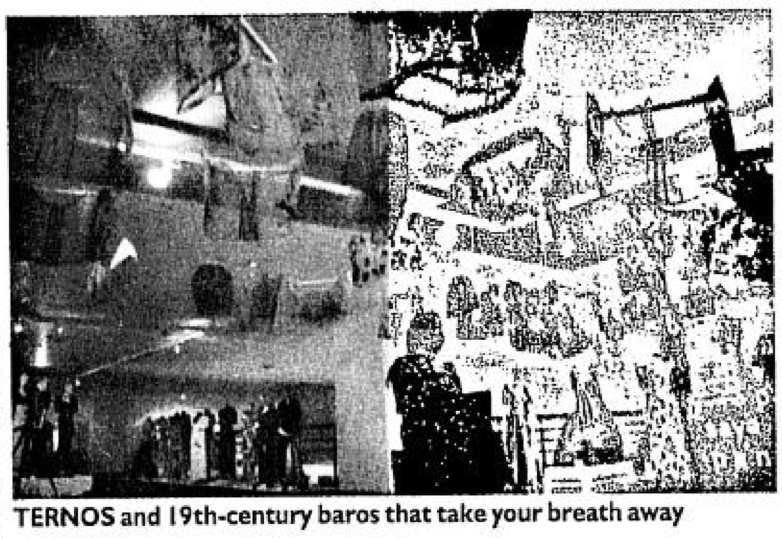
COMPETITION ternos at the Met



TERNOS and 19th-century baros that take your breath away

Creole colors . . .

From page G4

Sites (former military forts); Cane River Creole National Historic Park (Melrose, Magnolia, and Oakland plantations); and other plantations, homes and churches.

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Today, it is home to a history and diverse cultures: Europeans, Native Americans, free and enslaved Blacks, and the Creoles of French, Spanish, African and Native American descent.

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The house is an example of early construction methods and the use of hand-hewn timbers filled with bousillage (construction of wooden frames filled with mud strengthened by dried moss or animal hair). The agricultural landscape of cotton fields, pecan orchards, and barns is outstanding.

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Mecca for artists

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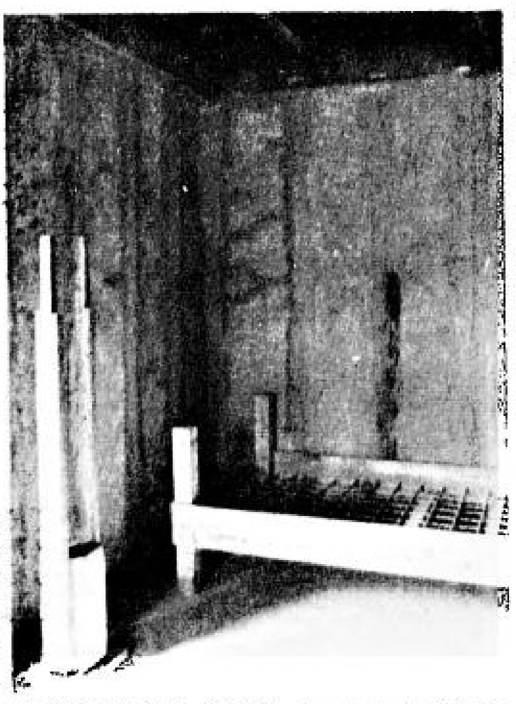
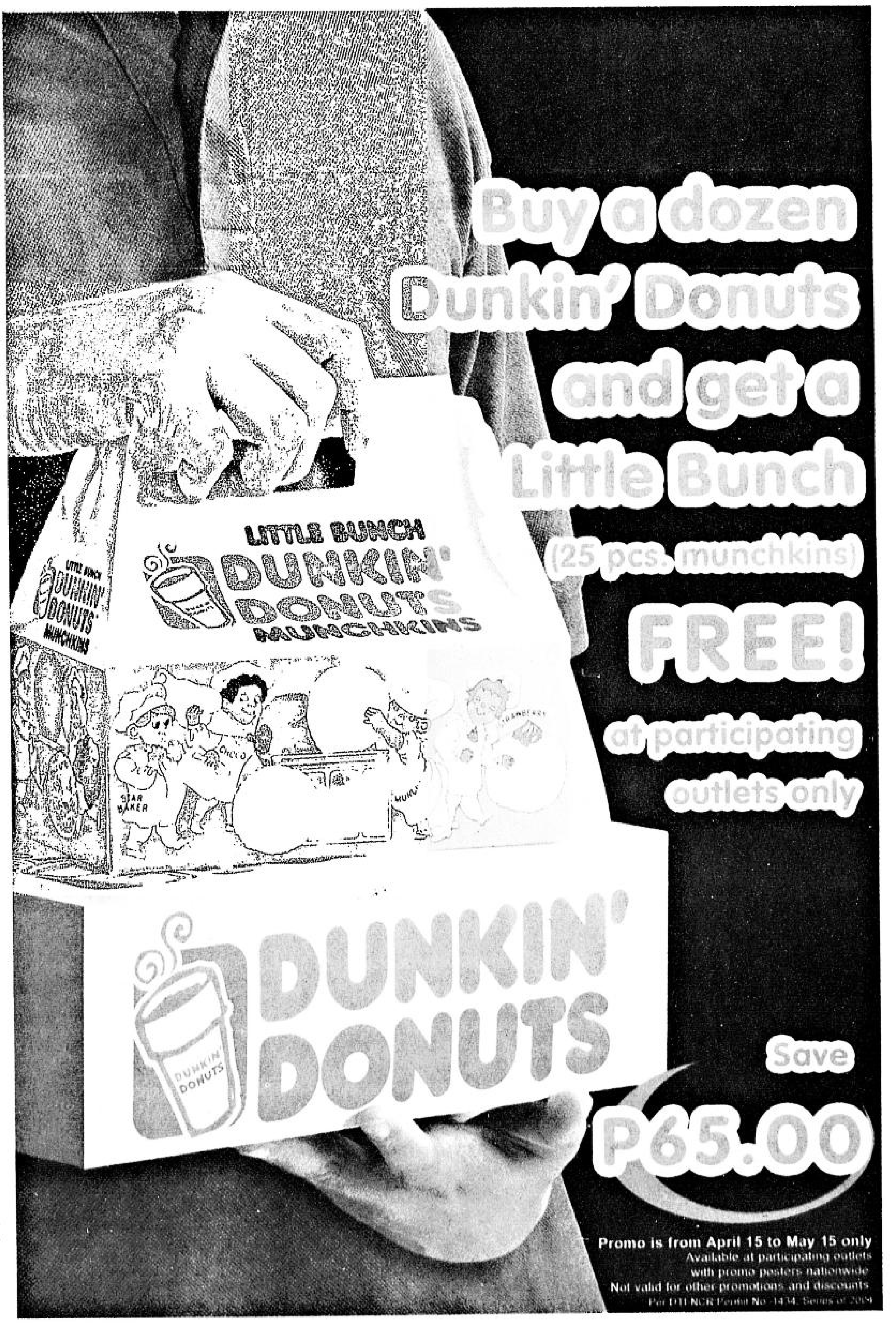


THE INTERIOR of Oakland, untouched since the 1960s, await conservation by the National Park Service.



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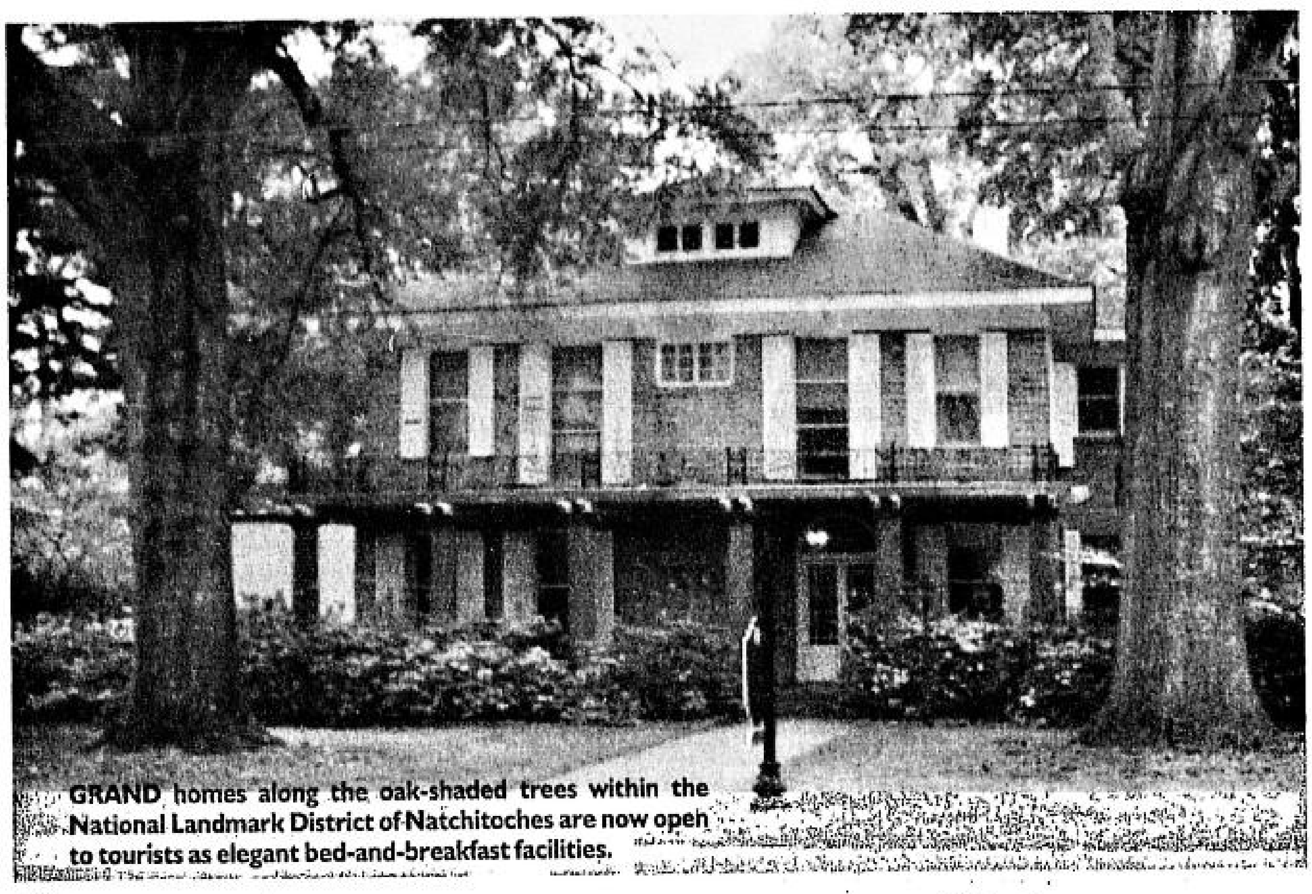


GRAND homes along the oak-shaded trees within the National Landmark District of Natchitoches are now open to tourists as elegant bed-and-breakfast facilities.

SEEN from the balcony of Oakland Plantation, slave quarters, barns and other outbuildings survive as reminders of bygone days.

Creole colors on Louisiana's Cane River

PRIDE OF PLACE

Augusto F. Villalon

TUCKED into the banks of Cane River in northwestern Louisiana, the historic city of Natchitoches (pronounced *Nak-a-tish*) is the oldest permanent settlement in the Louisiana Purchase Territory in southern United States.

Louisiana was still a French colony when Louis Juchereau de St. Denis founded Natchitoches in 1714. Close to the Texas border, the settlement was to be a trade outpost with Spanish Texas; it was so designed to deter Spanish advances into French territory.

Eventually Natchitoches grew into a flourishing port and crossroads, giving rise to vast cotton plantations along Cane River, still being farmed today by descendants of the original owners. Centuries ago, planters built magnificent plantation houses downriver but also maintained fine homes in town for social events.

Fiercely proud of their unique Creole heritage which combines European (French or Spanish) with African-American or Native American, local residents have revived their historic traditions as evidenced in their architecture and in their literature, songs, and, most particularly, the trademark Creole cuisine.

The success of their cultural revival is immediately felt in the Natchitoches and the Cane River area, where local pride sustains the historic preservation effort and revives different aspects of Creole culture which culminates in a series of festivals that celebrate being Creole.

Revival has resulted not only in a strong pride of culture and pride of place for the local residents. Most of them have converted their homes into bed-and-breakfast facilities. The picturesque area now enjoys brisk tourist arrivals.

Hollywood has gone to Natchitoches. "Steel Magnolias," a story of strong Natchitoches women written by a local author, was filmed entirely in the Natchitoches Historic Landmark District.

Local residents also have made sure the plantations and town houses continue to live on. The National Parks Service or private foundations preserve many of the plantations and town houses within an area designated by US Congress in 1994 as the Cane River National Heritage Area.

Not isolated

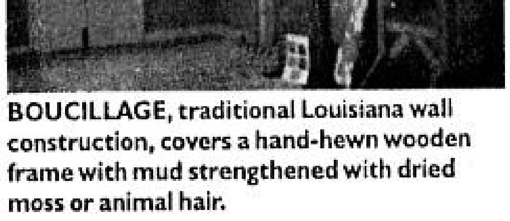
Picturesque as it is, Natchitoches cannot be isolated from the rural landscape around it. The city takes its historic significance from its long historic and cultural coexistence with the surrounding plantations along Cane River.

Since the founding of the city in 18th century, the hand of man has continued to shape both townscape and agricultural landscape along Cane River, proof of the constant interaction of humans with nature.

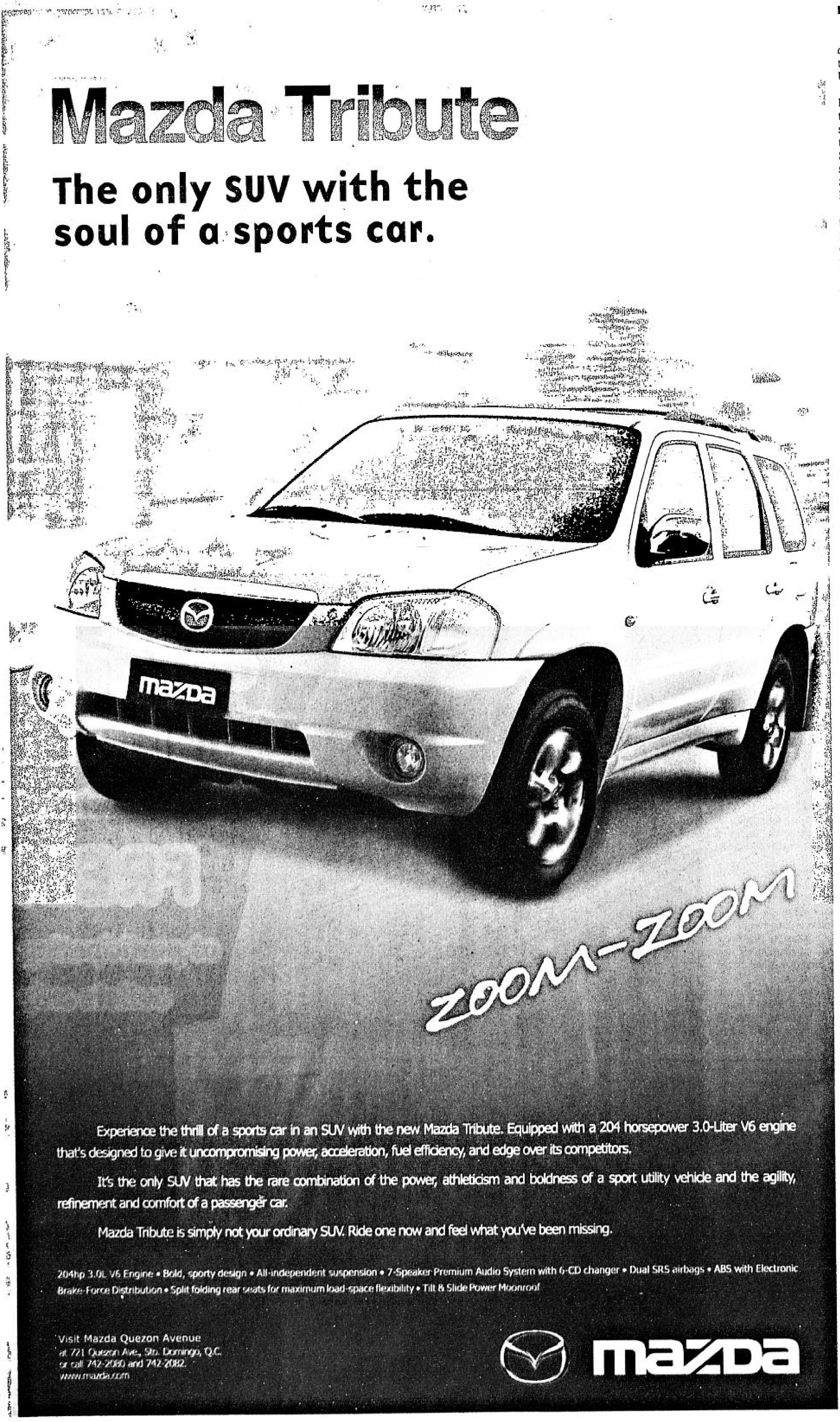
The result of the man-nature interaction is termed a "cultural landscape" and the preservation of such vanishing landscapes has recently become the concern of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (Unesco); International Council for Monuments and Sites; International Conservation Union; World Commission on Protected Areas; and the Frederick Law Olmsted Center of the United States National Parks Service.

Located primarily in Nachitoches Parish (county), the Cane River National Heritage Areas is a complex that includes six National Historic Landmark sites; a 33-block National Historic Landmark District; three State Historic

CREOLE/ G3



BOUCILLAGE, traditional Louisiana wall construction, covers a hand-hewn wooden frame with mud strengthened with dried moss or animal hair.



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